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What if?

PART 2 OF 2

Featuring more than
60 products intended
for GIE+EXPO 2020

KIOTI TAKES ON TURF CARE



Long-time customers of Kioti Tractor know the company provides high quality, reliable tractors and UTVs at a great value. Now Kioti is applying its rigorous standards to a lineup of Zero Turn Radius (ZTR) mowers. Top tier engines and drivetrain components meet world-class manufacturing to create ZTRs that won't disappoint. Designed and developed from the ground up for commercial or residential use, 12 models across four series – ZXR, ZXR SE, ZXC and ZXC SE – are at dealerships across North America right now.

"Our teams put in a lot of time and research to ensure these mowers provide an exceptional experience and great value to our customers," said Peter Dong-Kyun Kim, president and CEO of Daedong-USA, Inc. Kioti Tractor Division.

"We are thrilled to expand the Kioti offering with these ZXR and ZXCs."

FEATURES AND DETAILS OF Kioti's ZTR LINEUP

With superior value and reliability as the cornerstone of manufacturing, the Kioti ZTRs are full of features and ready for years of performance. Engines range from 21 to 27 horsepower with six models for professionals and six with property owners and hobby farmers in mind. Standard notch blades housed in a fabricated, reinforced 10-gauge steel deck of 48, 54 or 60 inches will cut through the toughest turf.

Save time with larger fuel capacities. 7.5 gallon (ZXR and ZXR SE) or 12.5 gallon (ZXC and ZXC SE) fuel tanks need fewer refilling breaks. Count on Briggs & Stratton or Kohler engines combined with Hydro-Gear® transmissions to provide reliable, hardworking performance. And if all that weren't enough, optimized belt routing reduces vibration and increases belt life, making you more comfortable and your machine last longer.

That's the result of industry experience and extensive market research. Kioti's ZTRs are exceptionally crafted. From the seat and deck lift lever positioning to optimized control connections, you get a powerful mower that makes your driving experience precise, responsive and comfortable.

"All aspects of these mowers were built with the operator in mind – from easy-to-reach controls and an ergonomically designed

seating position to a digital

control panel with keyless start and simple dial-type deck height adjustments," said Joel Hicks, senior product development manager.



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YOUR SWIVEL-HIP JOY RIDE AWAITS.



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Featuring more than 60 products intended for GIE+EXPO 2020

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[STATE OF THE INDUSTRY]

Industry Pulse

As we enter the fourth quarter of what has been an unusual year — to say the least — we want input from you, our readers, on how 2020 has been for your business. Please keep an eye on your inbox for our annual Industry Pulse survey. The results will be published in the December issue of *LM*. If you are interested in being interviewed for the story, please contact *LM* Senior Editor Abby Hart at ahart@northcoastmedia.net.



LM Industry Pulse

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Where there's smoke

As if there haven't been enough curveballs thrown our way in 2020, last month, wildfires sprang up in the West, burning millions of acres, destroying thousands of buildings and taking the lives of numerous people.

"It's incredibly devastating ... 11,000 homes have been burned in the state of Oregon," Bob Grover, president of Pacific Landscape Management, Hillsboro, Ore., told me. "It's the biggest, most horrific wildfire in Oregon ever."

What made the firestorm so devastating were the sustained winds of 40, 50 and 60 miles per hour. With winds blowing so strong, some fires spread as fast as 20 to 30 miles per hour. Along with the fire is significant tree damage. And then, smoke throughout the region.

"The air quality index (AQI), I've never seen it so high," Jackie Ishimaru-Gachina, president and CEO of California-based Gachina Landscape Management, reported to the magazine. "It's been three or four days that we were completely shut down, and depending on the region and microclimates, there have been branches that have closed. Literally, you would go

“What made the firestorm so devastating was the sustained winds of 40, 50 and 60 miles per hour. With winds blowing so strong, some fires spread as fast as 20 to 30 miles per hour.”

outside, and it was so dark, you had to put your lights on in the house because the sun was so obliterated from all the smoke coming down. I've never seen it like that before."

Having to shut down operations was a common theme we heard. Grover had to email his customer base to announce the company was shutting down for a "smoke day." As well, Gary Horton, CEO, Landscape Development Inc., Valencia, Calif., said his company was forced to sit out some working hours, as well as full days, based on the air quality.

"Many days have unhealthy air; some days have hazardous air," Horton said. "Mixed with the fires, we've had hot temperatures, 110, even 115. Our crews are working with masks on.

You can imagine the misery of being a field worker with a mask, on a hot day, with smoky air."

To watch our interviews with Grover and Horton, visit **Landscape Management.net**. Horton shared words of wisdom about how his company is supporting employees through a trying year. Along with the air quality and wildfires, employees are still learning to adapt to COVID-19 and now another new challenge with kids returning to school in some form or fashion.

"Above all, we want our crews to be open and communicative about what they need and how we can best put together schedules or work programs to help them get through and succeed in their own lives until we get to the other side of this," Horton said. "It's complex. I think, above all, companies have to be thoughtful, gracious and flexible. Now's not the time to be rigid hardliners. Not at all."

I asked Grover if the smoke would clear out soon.

"Every day, they say it's going to be tomorrow," he said. "It still hasn't cleared up."

Finally, I jokingly asked him if he knew what the next curveball thrown our way would be.

"I think locusts are coming next," he laughed. "I have a locust plan in the works." 🐛

Editor's note: Abby Hart and Sarah Webb contributed to this column.

This issue concludes our two-part, "What now?/What if?" series, where we took a hard look at what it meant not to have a GIE+EXPO show and what we would have seen if the show would have gone on. The 17-page story starts on page 12. We weren't able to accommodate every company in this issue, but if we missed you, please reach out and we'll share your product information in the future ... either in the magazine, in our LMDirect! weekly e-newsletter or on our website. We are the industry's go-to source for the latest, most accurate product information, and hopefully this massive undertaking, along with our Profitable Products section, demonstrates that.

A man wearing a grey long-sleeved shirt, a high-visibility yellow safety vest with orange reflective stripes, orange ear protection, and safety glasses is using a STIHL hedge trimmer. He is wearing black and orange STIHL gloves. The trimmer is orange and black, with the STIHL logo visible. He is trimming a green hedge. In the background, there are trees with some autumn-colored leaves.

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What can landscape pros do to make up for not being able to attend GIE+EXPO this year?

“In my opinion, most people go to the GIE show to network with their peers from around the country and to see what new products and innovations have been created in the past year. Without the show, we are going to have to do these things via the internet and old-fashioned calling until next year’s show. Perhaps this will cause us to appreciate GIE more and help us realize how important it is for us to move forward.”



Landscape Professionals

Richard Bare
Arbor-Nomics Turf
Norcross, Ga.

Troy Clogg
Troy Clogg Landscape Associates
Wixom, Mich.

Paul Fraynd
Sun Valley Landscaping
Omaha, Neb.

Luke Henry
ProScape Lawn & Landscaping Services
Marion, Ohio

Chris Joyce
Joyce Landscaping
Cape Cod, Mass.

Aaron Katerberg
Grapids Irrigation
Grand Rapids, Mich.

Jerry McKay
McKay Landscape Lighting
Omaha, Neb.

Bryan Stolz
Winterberry Landscape & Garden Center
Southington, Conn.

Greg Winchel
Winchel Irrigation
Grandville, Mich.

Industry Consultants

Dan Gordon
TurfBooks
Newton, N.J.

Marty Grunder
The Grow Group
Dayton, Ohio

Phil Harwood
Grow the Bench
Grand Rapids, Mich.

Kevin Kehoe
3PG Consulting
Laguna, Calif.

Jeffrey Scott
Jeffrey Scott Consulting
New Orleans, La.



“I would recommend attending Virtual Landscapes and Zoom with Champions through NALP. These will be a great way to connect with the best and brightest in our industry for a discounted price.”



“Connect with those you would have met with in Louisville via direct contact or by joining a peer group.”



“It’s still going to be a few months before in-person events are rolling again, it seems. There are other ways to network virtually. Form your own Zoom rooms and get talking. You can still network — you just have to be creative and put your ‘can-do’ attitude to work!”

“Attend the Zoom sessions and other webinars. Work with consultants to invest time in forecasting the rest of the year and into spring — revenues, costs and investments.”



MORE ONLINE

See more great advice and complete answers from our Editorial Advisory Board in the online version of this feature at LandscapeManagement.net.



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Home of champions

SiteOne, landscape companies partner on Atlanta community service project

BY ABBY HART | LM SENIOR EDITOR

This past spring, SiteOne Landscape Supply partnered with Atlanta-area landscape companies to provide landscaping and irrigation installation at Champions Place, a new shared home for physically challenged young adults who have aged out of high school programs. Champions Community Foundation (CCF), the nonprofit organization that supports Champions Place, aims to significantly improve the lives of young adults with physical disabilities, enabling them to reach their full potential as self-reliant, productive and fulfilled citizens in their local community.

The volunteer project started with a meeting with SiteOne Chairman and CEO Doug Black, SiteOne Area Sales Manager Randy Moody and foundation board members. Initially, the project was going to be completed by SiteOne associates, but coronavirus restrictions caused the team to pivot to landscape companies.

"I called on companies that were good customers to SiteOne and just



explained what we were working on ... it was not difficult for people to come in and help out," said Moody, who coordinated the project. "It was really rewarding how people just jumped in and helped."

Landscape companies All American Landscape, Aqua Underground, Davis Landscape, J&J Landscape, LDC Group, Meadows Landscape, Metro Contracting, Oasis Landscapes & Irrigation, Russell Landscape Group, Sprinkalawn Atlanta and Young Earth Systems all participated in the effort.

The companies combined to install 23 zones of irrigation; 100 trees; 1,600 plants; 36,500 square feet of TifTuf Bermudagrass sod; 3,500 square feet of paver patio; 5,000 square

feet of synthetic turf; a drainage system; an outdoor kitchen; a fire pit; a water feature; and an entrance sign.

Kevin Paulen is president of Oasis Landscapes & Design, which had four crew members on the site installing irrigation and drainage. "We love to do community projects," he said. "As soon as (Moody) told me about the project, I was thrilled to get involved." His company now provides the site with weekly maintenance.

CCF and SiteOne haven't been able to officially celebrate the opening of Champions Place, but they're proud of the work. "There hasn't been a big finale yet, and we haven't been able to have that big grand opening event because of COVID, but people are amazed at the transformation," Moody said.

To learn more and check out additional photos from the project, visit LandscapeManagement.net. @



A fire pit is one of many contributions Atlanta landscapers contributed to the CCF cause.

Designing for a cause


BY SARAH WEBB | LM ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Green Schoolyards America has created a national COVID-19 Outdoor Learning Initiative by using outdoor school spaces and parks to help schools around the country reopen safely and in a cost-effective way, according to CEO and founder Sharon Danks.

The organization is calling on landscape architects to help design the outdoor learning spaces. The pro bono landscape design assistance program is called the COVID-19 Emergency Schoolyard Design Volunteers. Danks noted

that hundreds have signed up to offer their support.

"Schools weren't built with ventilation systems set up to filter the virus during the pandemic," Danks said. "Outside, you have more space and fresher air. There have been problems with online learning in the spring, where large percentages of kids from around the country never turned on their computer once, which resulted in catastrophic learning losses and also some mental health issues."

Landscape architects interested in assisting can contact their local pre-K-12 schools and districts in high-need neighborhoods to let them know about this initiative and help schools design and diagram outdoor classroom plans by visiting [Greenschoolyards.org/covid-learn-outside](https://www.greenschoolyards.org/covid-learn-outside). 

BRIGGS & STRATTON COMPLETES SALE TO KPS CAPITAL PARTNERS

The sale of Briggs & Stratton to KPS Capital Partners is complete, and Briggs & Stratton has exited from Chapter 11, said Eric Chack, senior vice president of global operations in a letter to partners.

KPS Capital Partners is the manager of KPS Special Situations Funds, a family of investment funds with approximately \$11.5 billion of assets under management, Chack said.

Chack also named Steve Andrews as president and CEO. KPS and Andrews partnered in 2011 to form International Equipment Solutions (IES), which they managed through a series of

acquisitions and growth initiatives. IES is an independent manufacturer of attachment tools, operator cabs and other complex fabrications for off-highway applications.

GIE+EXPO AND HNA LAUNCH FREE ONLINE PORTAL

GIE+EXPO and Hardscape North America (HNA) show organizers have launched GIE+EXPO ToGo, a free online portal that will connect industry members to the new innovations they would have found at the trade show this October. Exhibitors are currently loading their information into the portal, which will remain active through the end of 2020. It can be accessed via gie-expo.com and [HardscapeNA.com](https://hardscapena.com) starting Oct. 1.

On the portal, visitors will find dynamic exhibitor profiles that can be searched by name or product type; a new product spotlight where exhibitors will launch their latest innovations; resources, such as product specs, demo videos, special event links and brochures; and exclusive special offers.

Visitors are encouraged to register for a free My ToGo Planner, which will allow them to save exhibitor listings, links and product information. It also provides access to show specials and discounts. Creating a My ToGo Planner will give attendees the ability to compile a must-connect-with list of exhibitors and share saved exhibitors, products and contacts with colleagues.

LM BRINGS HOME TOCA AWARDS

Though there was no in-person event, the 2020 Turf & Ornamental Communicators Association (TOCA) annual awards ceremony still took place virtually, and LM took home some hardware.

In all, the magazine earned five awards:

- First, Best Single Issue, LM150, Seth Jones, Abby Hart, Clara Richter, Sarah Webb, Danielle Pesta
- First, Column — Commercial



Publications, A workforce with no name, Seth Jones

- First, General Feature Article — Commercial Publications, 25 companies you should know, Seth Jones, Abby Hart, Clara Richter, Sarah Webb, Danielle Pesta, Christina Herrick
- Merit, Two-Plus Page Design — Editorial Printed Magazines, LM150 Profiles, Tracie Martinez, LM Staff
- Merit, Best Print Magazine Cover — LM December 2019, Industry Pulse Cover, Tracie Martinez

PROGREEN TURF AND LANDSCAPE – NEWPORT, N.C.

Michael Hall began his landscaping journey in high school where he was involved in FFA and studied horticulture. After graduating in 2009 from North Carolina State University with a degree in Turfgrass and Business Management, Hall started his business with a backpack sprayer, working out of the back of his pickup truck.

ProGreen Turf and Landscape Inc. has since grown into a full-service landscaping company in Newport, N.C., with 40 employees.



**MICHAEL HALL,
OWNER**

“Our business grew by 35 percent in two years just by word of mouth from satisfied customers,” says Hall. “We believe that if we use the right machines and do our best work, our business will continue to thrive in the industry.”

Hall was introduced to Gravely mowers after attending the GIE+EXPO a few years ago, where he met several members of the Gravely team at a few Grow Group events. In 2019, Hall purchased two Gravely Pro-Stance mowers and two Pro-Turn 200 models, and he plans on growing with Gravely.

“There are many reasons why we chose and stick with Gravely,” says Hall. “The first thing that comes to mind though, is ease of maintenance. It’s a game changer for us when we can service the machines ourselves. That means



less downtime for us. In fact, we haven’t had one of our Gravely units in the shop yet.”

Hall says he appreciates the time savings provided by the Pro-Stance. His employees can easily adjust the deck height, hop off the machine to remove debris in their path and fold up the standing platform to save room on the trailer.

“You just can’t beat what Gravely has to offer in their machines,” Hall says.

Hall isn’t only impressed with the features and ease of the machine. He says AriensCo employees take pride in their work and ProGreen will always support a company constantly trying to improve. “I remember going to their plant to see the assembly process and the employees were having fun working,” says Hall. “There was music playing and it was a great environment to work in. After my visit, I bought a speaker for our shop because I wanted my employees to have fun while also working hard.”

“I’m grateful for the work Gravely puts in to improve both their machines and our industry,” Hall continues. “They’re out in the field trying to make it better for us every day — from supporting industry events to listening to product feedback from us.”



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AN (IMAGINARY) GIE+EXPO TO REMEMBER

Our team of journalists kicked the tires and walked the aisles of a GIE+EXPO unlike any other

BY THE LM STAFF

Every year, some 25,000 people visit Louisville, Ky., to attend GIE+EXPO and see the latest and greatest products for the lawn care and landscape industry. But, every year, an untold number of people can't get away from their work to attend. Those hundreds of thousands of people rely on sources like us to fill them in on what they would have seen had they been there in person.

This year — a year when a global pandemic has shut down an in-person GIE+EXPO — the team members at LM stepped up their game and visited virtually with 25 companies to learn what would have been their big unveil at the 2020 GIE+EXPO had there been one.

Based on those interviews, 2020 was going to be a heck of a show.

So, it's our honor to humbly present this imaginary first-person report with 25 companies on "what if" the 2020 GIE+EXPO had actually happened as planned.



PHOTO: BRIAN BOHANNON PHOTOGRAPHY

Missing milling around the outdoor demo area this year? We've brought the equipment to you.

VISITS WITH GIANT, BOBCAT, GRASSHOPPER AND MORE

BY SETH JONES
LM EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The GIE+EXPO is a highlight of my year. Meeting in-person with our readers and partners is the lifeblood of this magazine.

I kicked off this year with a meeting with Giant. Their compact wheel loaders with telescopic booms have had a longer career in Europe than here in the U.S.; in fact, Giant has only been focused on the North American market since opening an office in Sioux Falls, Iowa, in 2016.

Justin Sinning, North American sales manager, Midwest Region, Tobroco Machinery, gave me the run-down on Giant's 3500 with telescopic boom. The machine

» **TRY IT OUT**
Grasshopper said potential customers testing out mowers makes them more likely to buy.

has a traditional steering wheel, gas pedal on the right and clutch/brake on the left, so it feels like a car. But, its

maneuverability is nothing like a car.

"It's very unique and different in that the machine bends in the middle," Sinning told me. "When you go over some terrain that stresses the frame on the machine ... not only does it articulate in the middle, but it also oscillates left to right. It oscillates from the front position of the frame to the rear position of the frame."

Sinning told me he enjoys seeing the reaction of longtime skid-steer operators when they get behind the wheel of a Giant 3500.

"You can visually look at it and conceptualize and say, 'Yeah, I see that it's going to turn in the middle, and I can see it's probably nimble, but how tight is it really going to

» TURN ON A DIME

Giant's 3500 wheel loader with telescopic boom offers a maneuverability that surprises even the most experienced operators.

turn?" Sinning said. "When they get in that machine and operate it for the first time, it's really interesting to see those experienced operators light up. They don't expect it to turn on a dime as much as it does."

Sinning said what sets Giant apart is the articulation but also the telescopic boom. Eventually, all of Giant's North American offerings will feature the telescopic boom. He said Giant's biggest obstacle is overcoming generational buying: What was good enough for Dad is good enough for me.

"You see a lot of users who are apprehensive because it's different," Sinning said. "But, once they see it's more nimble, it leaves less of a footprint, it articulates and it doesn't have that rigid frame pressure to the ground that a tank-driven-style skid-steer has ... It's a European design but it's catching on."

MOWER MANIA

From the European design, I then saw something created much closer to home — at Grasshopper, based only 160 miles from me in Moundridge, Kan. I talked with Brian Schoenthaler, now semiretired, who has been

Continued on page 14



Continued from page 13

attending GIE+EXPO on behalf of the company since the mid-1990s. He showed me the 900 Series mower, a mower he described as having “super power.”

“It’s an electronic fuel injection, 37-horse Grasshopper — it’s a big block, Briggs & Stratton engine,” Schoenthaler said. “It’s got 61- and 72-inch deck options out front, so you have the capabilities of mowing under low-hanging obstacles. And, the deck will actually raise up with our power fold feature that allows you to rotate that deck up and clean underneath it without having to remove the deck. The deck can also be removed easily and replaced with a number of turf implements to make it a year-round machine.”

Over at the Case Construction demo area, we saw the new B Series — five compact track loaders and eight skid-steers featuring a completely redesigned operator interface, including new left- and right-hand posts with simple ignition, push button operation, easy throttle control and intuitive switches for all core machine functions.

To add to that Cadillac feel is an 8-inch LCD multi-function display that serves as the command center of the machine and a split screen to a backup camera. The camera is operational in both reverse and forward and increases the operator’s visibility of the job.

From Case, I meandered over to the big event Bobcat had planned. What a crowd! That’s where we had this year’s biggest celebrity encounter of GIE+EXPO 2020, when we intercepted (sorry, Eagles fans) Philadelphia Eagles Quarterback Carson Wentz, who was serving as spokesperson for Bobcat’s entrance into the zero-turn mower market.

“I’ve had this thing for a couple weeks,” Wentz said, speak-

» **ALL-OUT OFFERING**
Bobcat added zero-turns to its lineup to give customers a full suite of products.



» **A NEW LOOK**
Case Construction’s B Series offers new compact track loaders and skid-steers with radial and vertical lift.

ing of the ZT7000. “It’s tough, it cuts through the tall stuff, the thick stuff, the short stuff — it does it all. My favorite thing is, just like Ricky Bobby, I like to go fast. This thing does that. For a mower, this can cover some ground, and it allows me to get back to everything I enjoy doing with my family and other projects.”

Mike Ballweber, president of Doosan Bobcat North America, explained why Bobcat decided to move into the zero-turn segment.

“We are always advancing innovations. Expanding into zero-turn mowers is the perfect next step for us and our customers,” Ballweber said. “You may be asking why mowers, why now? At Bobcat, we’re always looking toward what’s next. What do our customers want, and how do we deliver the right products, services and solutions? Our goal is to offer a full suite of products. That’s why adding zero-turn mowers made sense.”

Ron Scheffler, senior product manager, showed off the ZT7000 with deep-deck air effect that allows the grass to pop up sooner for a clean cut.

“The deep deck design gives you a full vacuum to lift straight up for a great cut,” he said. “The sharp blades allow for a nice crisp cut, instead of tearing. And, the air gap baffles are bolt on so they’re easily replaceable. The gaps allow for a greater air flow, which gives a great dispersion outside of the deck and a cleaner deck at the end of the day.”

HEADING BACK TO THE AIRPORT

I don’t have the space to give everything I saw a mention, but a few others that stood out include:

Continued on page 16

MODERN TECH. CLASSIC STRENGTH.

CASE Construction Equipment B Series skid steers and compact track loaders feature an all-new 8-inch LCD operator screen with backup camera; completely updated and simplified operator controls; even greater cab comfort; and while the machine looks the same on the outside, we've re-engineered its critical inner workings to stand up to what you and your jobsites face every day.



Learn more at CaseCE.com/BSERIES

Continued from page 14

● Vermeer gave attendees a look at its compact articulated loaders (ATX), featuring telescopic boom. With a multitool attachment plate, the ATX can complete various tasks, including landscaping, snow removal and tree care work. The ATX850 is equipped with a 57-hp Kohler KDI903

» **RIP IT**
The GeoRipper is designed for digging in small, defined areas.

engine and has an extended boom reach of 29 inches for loading material to a dump height of 117 inches.

● Mini-Trencher unveiled



the battery-powered GeoRipper, ideal for digging irrigation, landscaping edging or other jobs where ripping up the soil in a small defined area is needed. The company has a demonstration on YouTube that shows the power this new battery-powered tool packs.

● Siboredrill showed off its SB2-16HD, SB2-15 Micro Bore and the SB2-18 Makita Electric Motor Kit. The SB2-18 is an electric drill that will bore up to a 4-inch hole, 8 feet in length. The company is offering free shipping until the end of the month. @

» **VERSATILE**
Vermeer's ATX850 can be used for landscape work, tree removal and snow services.



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VISITS WITH DPL TELEMATICS, JOBBER, LAWNBOT AND MORE

BY ABBY HART
LM SENIOR EDITOR

The Kentucky Exposition Center hall and the demo grounds outside are lined with the latest excavators, skid-steers, mowers and more. Protecting that equipment from theft is top of mind at DPL Telematics, and the company is hearing that growing concern from its customers.

"Since February, we're finding we've had more than 20 reported recoveries of different things from skid-steers, trailers and even stump grinders," Tony Nicoletti, vice president of sales and business development for DPL Telematics, told me. "I know theft is becoming a really big issue, and usually the back half of the year is worse than the first half, just because there's a lot more time

» SECURE VALUABLES

DPL Telematics' portable GPS tracking devices allow users to track data, such as run time, idle time, distance and location.

off and holidays, so things get stolen when people are not around."

Nicoletti pointed to the American Rental Association Insurance's list of the most stolen equipment over the previous 12 months, noting that the top three items were trailers, skid-steers and mowers.

To protect companies' precious investments, DPL Telematics provides self-contained GPS tracking



devices that allow users to wirelessly monitor any asset.

At this year's GIE, the company is showcasing its AssetView Tracking Series and AssetCommand solutions.

The AssetView Tracking Series is a portable battery-powered GPS tracking device that installs quickly, requires no external power and can last years on off-the-shelf batteries — so if a device goes down, it's just a trip to the drugstore to grab fresh batteries. The AssetView's Adaptive Tracking feature actively alerts users of curfew violations, movements or geofence breaches.

The AssetCommand model is a hardwired GPS tracking device, which allows users to track run time, idle time, distance, location and battery voltage of assets, set maintenance schedules and receive reminders based on actual usage, distance driven or days — whichever comes first. The AssetCommand's 3D Accelerometer feature detects driving

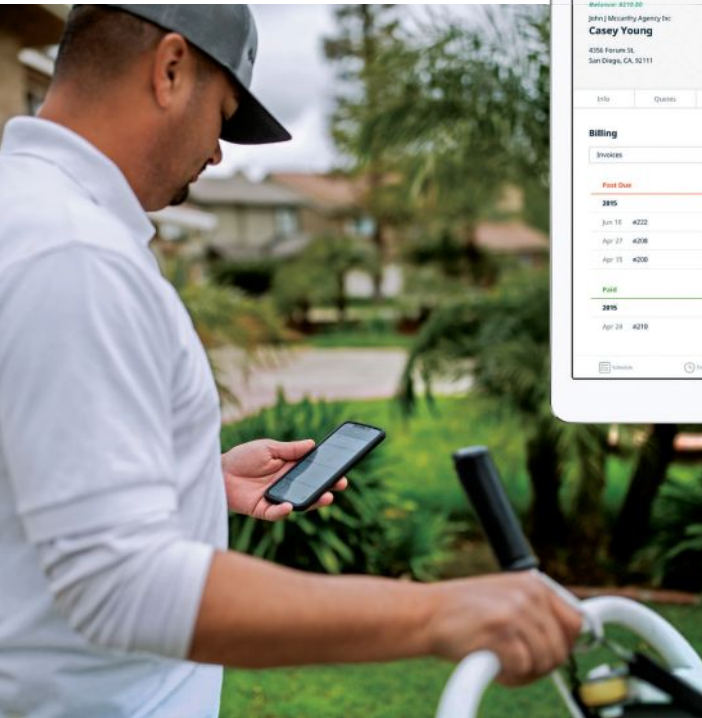
events such as tilting, rollover, rapid acceleration and harsh braking.

Nicoletti said the portability of DPL Telematics' tracking
Continued on page 18

» PARTY ON 4TH STREET

LM's party on the Goose Island Beer Bridge is a can't-miss event at GIE+EXPO.





» QUICK CASH

Jobber's extended partnership with Stripe Capital allows contractors to access funding through the Jobber dashboard, and its online payments feature ensures fast invoice collection.

"These people have so much going on and so many new factors because of COVID, things they didn't have to deal with in a previous season, and then potentially new opportunities," Milosovic told me. "The idea of just keeping everything in one place just continues to become more appealing to them."

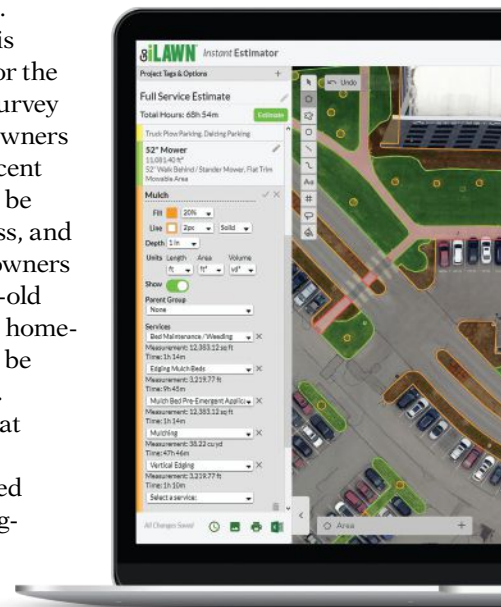
This past summer, the company launched financing and instant payouts through Stripe Capital, allowing users to access funding directly through their Jobber dashboard, without applying for financing through a bank.

"It's really timely ... we see a trend of banks tightening up credit lines and approving loans, and, at the same time, we're seeing home improvement projects skyrocket," Milosovic said. "Our landscapers are some of the busiest people right now in terms of our customer base."

Because of COVID, Jobber's also touting its online payments feature, which provides instant payouts, allowing users to access any invoices collected in seconds, rather than waiting a couple of days through a bank.

Communication is another key factor for the company. Jobber's survey of 1,400-plus homeowners revealed that 58 percent feel it's important to be able to text a business, and 84 percent of homeowners in the 24- to 34-year-old range (the emerging homeowner base) want to be able to text message.

In response to that data, in September, the company released two-way text messaging through the Jobber app. The feature aims to centralize information and simplify communication with the customer, such as rescheduling services due to weather.



» SOLID ESTIMATE

Go iLawn's Instant Estimator offers new project templates and new measuring and estimating tools.

Continued from page 17

devices is what sets them apart. The products are also IP67 rated, which means they are rugged and made for heavy-use equipment, such as trailers, mowers and skid-steers. (But, I couldn't help but think that I could use one in my car.)

DPL does not require a long-term commitment for its tracking devices. "A lot of folks sign up, you get a two-year commitment, it autorenews at the end of it, or it's sold month-to-month," Nicoletti said. "Especially for landscape, when you have seasonal activity, you can actually deactivate products, so you're not paying for (protection) those months that you're not using it."

A FAMILY REUNION IN LOUISVILLE

GIE+EXPO isn't just a yearly opportunity to make new connections on a big scale. For many, it's a chance to get together with old friends.

Our friends at Jobber agree. "For us, GIE is absolutely like a family reunion, and that's how we always come at it," said Moly Milosovic, Jobber's senior manager of community. "We get in touch with our customers, we get in touch with our partners and we basically make our booth base camp for everybody."

At the 2019 GIE+EXPO, Milosovic said she noticed from her conversations on the show floor that the landscape industry was even more ahead of the game than past years in terms of adopting technology.

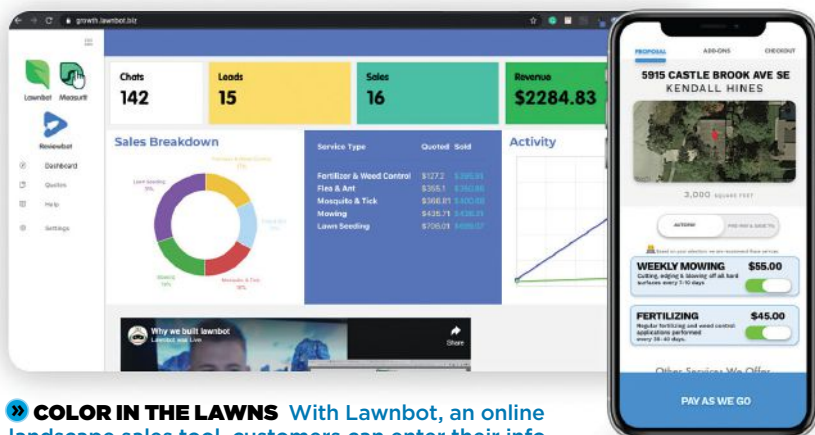
That's good news for Jobber. For this year's "What if?" show, the service technology company focused on explaining how its software is centralizing tasks for its landscape industry clients.

FINGER PAINTING AT GIE+EXPO?

The LM party at the Goose Island Beer Bridge was challenging with the social distancing, but I still was able to meet with readers and hear some stories. It was interesting speaking to Kendall Hines, CEO of Lawnbot. His company made its second appearance at the show.

Lawnbot's software product integrates into the websites of landscape companies and adds online ordering to their businesses. With the software on desktop and mobile, homeowners simply visit a landscape company's website, color in their lawn where they want it to be treated and receive a proposal, sign up and pay all through the website.

Lawnbot's patent-pending measuring technology, Measur.it, is the key to the process. "This is literally coloring in with your finger — like finger painting," Hines told me. "We



» **COLOR IN THE LAWN** With Lawnbot, an online landscape sales tool, customers can enter their info, color in their lawn and get a proposal within minutes.

tried to design it with all kinds of consumers in mind. You don't have to learn how to use it in order to use it."

According to Lawnbot's data, most people complete a purchase — from filling out info, coloring in the lawn, getting a proposal to buying — in three to four minutes.

The time it takes to onboard a company with the Lawnbot software

also has been streamlined to about 10-14 days. "We're using price tables, programs, prepay discounts ... this is very customized to the business," Hines said.

"It gives (companies) the power of Amazon, but for lawn care companies," he added.

The software features a dashboard

Continued on page 20

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where companies can view their platform's leads, sale data and quoting metrics. The numbers are crucial, which Hines knows from experience — he's the former CEO of Lawn Doctor of Grand Rapids, in Grand Rapids, Mich.

The growing 9-month-old company showcased its service software at GIE last year with 20 clients under its belt. This year, Lawnbot has 140 customers using the platform, and in March, it announced a partnership and integration with software and marketing company Real Green Systems.

"The companies who use us are very forward-thinking and want to have a competitive advantage in the marketplace," he added. "The rise that we've seen in buying things online in general, especially now with COVID, (shows) we live in a new world now, and we have to constantly be adapting to it."

LAST DAY OF THE SHOW

Brian Ivey, president and meteorologist at Neowweather, isn't looking to serve up a basic five-day weather forecast to his customers.

He said he wants to provide specific and impact-based forecasts to the company's landscape, construction and snow and ice clients — information that will actually help contractors

know what's next on the forecast and accurately plan around it.

This year, the company is showing off its new client portal, which will allow contractors to log in on desktop and mobile to look at and interact with radar images and display current weather watches and warnings and current wind conditions for the entire U.S. — basically, users can view a specific forecast for their specific industry and location. Neowweather also provides weather reports with detailed maps and charts, days in advance if there's a storm. It also offers blog posts with updates as weather events evolve.

"For example, we might have additional details in the forecast product, and it might be different from one industry to the next," Ivey said. "Landscapers can feel confident that (a storm) is probably going to stay away from their area, especially during the heart of the day."

And, there's a bonus for contractors: consulting support. Users can receive specific updates by texting or calling Neowweather and getting more information, such as whether a snowfall will be heavy, wet or wind driven, or answers around timing and whether a weather event will affect the start of the workday. Who wouldn't want to have a meteorologist on call?

This year, the company is offering a new call alert system. "This allows

us to be your weather alarm clock if there's an unexpected event going on," Ivey said. "We can let (contractors) know, so they can get up and treat their properties and beat the competition."

Ivey said pricing is dynamic for the Neowweather service, and he invited contractors to learn more about the service and how the company can serve their needs.

ONE LAST MEETING

I thought my 2020 GIE+EXPO was wrapped up as I sat at the airport, but then I saw Vectorworks CEO Biplab Sarkar, Ph.D., sit down nearby, and once again I pulled out my reporter's notebook.

As clients become savvy and begin to request more detailed designs from their landscape contractors, landscape designers need a sophisticated design software, Sarkar told me.

"Many of the projects actually require people to create models of what they're designing," Sarkar said. "(Landscape designers) used to do 2D, and now they're doing the visualizations in 3D models and 3D quantity takeoff. Building information modeling in landscape is gaining traction."

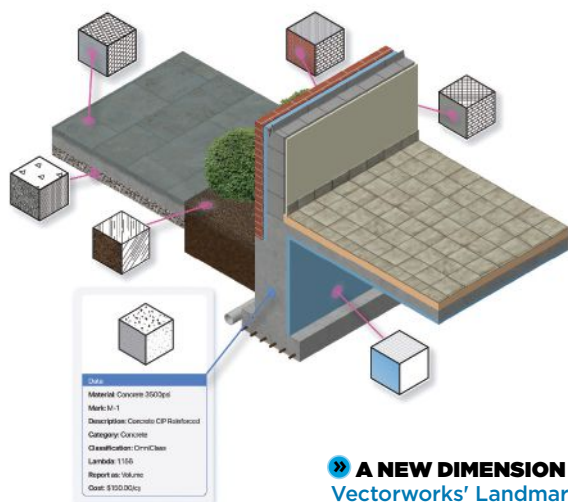
Enter Vectorworks' latest version, Vectorworks 2021. The company's new building information modeling software includes a new version, Vectorworks Landmark 2021, tailored to the landscape industry.

Sarkar said that with Landmark 2021, designers have better visualization tools. For example, they can visualize things like mitigation performance, plant seasonal interest and plant water efficiency.

Landscape

Area is a feature used for specifying objects, such as landscape beds, and the new 3D components allow the user to attach materials to layers





» **A NEW DIMENSION**
Vectorworks' Landmark 2021 offers improved 3D visualization and a feature that allows the user to attach materials to soil layers.

of the soil — meaning that the plans and the subgrade material are now quantifiable and better visualized, Sarkar said.

The grade object feature now allows users to better model water flow directions and sloping directions according to their needs by

Landmark 2021 also collaborates with Excel, allowing users to edit quantities in a Vectorworks worksheet, export and edit data into Excel and bring it back to Vectorworks.



making use of grade networks. Grade objects can be connected and move as one object, then elevations and slopes adjust.

Sarkar said that about 80 percent of the improvements for this latest version has come directly from the company's users — landscape contractors, designers and landscape architects.

"What we've created is the ultimate landscape design software solution," Sarkar said. "Contractors can do a lot of things for which they previously had to use different applications." 📱

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VISITS WITH HILLTIP, OGURA CLUTCH, MULCH MATE AND MORE

BY SARAH WEBB | LM ASSOCIATE EDITOR

It's obvious that 2020 has changed the outlook for many companies. My first visit for "What if?" GIE+EXPO 2020 was with a company that has looked at what it had that could help businesses keep customers safe in a pandemic.

For Hilltip Corp., a European manufacturer of snow and ice control equipment, the coronavirus pandemic inspired a tweak to its traditional fare.

At the beginning of the pandemic, one of the company's distributors dismantled one of the company's vehicle-mounted snow and ice treatment units and mounted it on a chassis that can be pulled around the inside of a building. A few additional tweaks later, and voila: the 30-inch-wide, 4-foot-tall indoor/outdoor spray 30M machine was born.

"It can fit through basically any common door opening and has spray bars that people can run disinfectants and preventives through to treat public areas against COVID-19," Craig Sandmann, North American sales manager at Hilltip Corp., told me. "If they are treating, for instance, a Walmart as a contract, they can also take that machine inside if they chose and bid on sanitizing the inside

of the store if they wanted. These machines can also be used for snow and ice control, but they're primarily built to be used indoors."

The machine is currently being marketed and sold in the U.S. and Canada. Born from a pandemic, the disinfecting qualities of the machine may prove to be useful — at trade shows and the like — long after coronavirus has been controlled.

"The machine (innovation) goes back to March when fear and apprehension was at its highest, the economy came to a halt, people were staying home and this distributor had a customer that had a need. Our spray technology has been proven in Europe for a number of years," Sandmann said. "Why rethink the wheel? We just tried to get this into a much smaller package that someone can use indoors, and that's how it evolved."

Additionally, at what was the company's inaugural year at the show, Hilltip showcased large poly salt spreaders for pickup trucks and larger vehicles that have tracking technology that allows pros to see their equipment and how much material they're spreading.



» **ROLL WITH THE TIMES**
One of Hilltip's snow and ice units became repurposed for disinfecting.

ROAD TRIP

I ran into Tom McDermott, national sales manager for Scenic Road Manufacturing, as I walked the show floor. Scenic Road Manufacturing rolled out a flat-free turf tire this year, to complement its line of wheelbarrows for the professionals.

The turf tires are a wider version of a wheelbarrow tire, typically 6 inches wide.

"Our pneumatic tire is popular, and we recently sourced a flat-free version of that," he told me. McDermott added the tire is being marketed to both residential and commercial landscapers.

"We started marketing it this year, and it's exceeding our expectations so far with the response," McDermott said. "This tire is something that's specifically designed for landscapers because the wider tires tend to plow less in soft surfaces like sand or gravel, so you don't have as much





» **DIVOTS BE GONE**
The wider wheels on Scenic Road's flat-free tires allow for fewer indents in a yard.

electric clutch brake products.

"It essentially engages the deck blades with the flip of a switch, so instead of pulling that big lever on a

residential ride-on mower to engage the deck blades, this has got an electric switch," said Michael Vasko, regional sales manager at Ogura. "As residential and commercial ride-on mowers got larger and deck sizes got large, it was an additional convenience to the operator."

The product has been tried and true in a variety of industries. Vasko said it was originally an offshoot of

the original air-conditioning compressor clutch from an automobile and that the PTO electric clutch brake was designed in the 1970s.

He added that the product has safety benefits as well because of the inclusion of the brake.

"There are industry standards that we need to meet in order to sell the product," he said. "For residential machines, (that) dictates that the blades stop in five seconds; for a commercial machine, that's seven seconds."

An additional feature for the operator when using the electric clutch is the new Soft Start feature.

The Soft Start controller is designed to extend the time of engagement of the friction surfaces to allow for a smoother startup. The physical size of the control is small — fewer than 3 inches long, 1.5 inches wide and 7/8-inch deep. It meets or

Continued on page 24

resistance when you're pushing it, and it also doesn't mar the surface, which is a benefit when landscapers are mulching. It won't leave the marks that a narrower tire would leave in a lawn. It's something that's very popular with landscapers."

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exceeds industry standards for vibration, shock, humidity, salt spray and dust and immersion, making it suitable for outdoor use.

Reduced shock loads to the equipment operator, improved life of mechanical components and longer belt life are just a few of the benefits of using the Soft Start technology, Vasko said. It can be used on zero-turn mowers, lawn and garden tractors, stump cutters, portable sawmills, blowers and fans.

» **SMOOTH START** Ogura's Soft Start feature allows for smoother startup on machines, reducing operator strain.



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LUNCH WITH MULCH MATE

I took a much-needed lunch break with Nick Carlson, CEO and founder of Mulch Mate.

Mulch Mate had a big debut of the Kart Mate at the 2019 GIE+EXPO. Carlson said the company is ready to take the product one step further — and lighter and cheaper — with the innovation of Kart Mate Residential.

Kart Mate is a heavy-duty articulating cart that mounts to a zero-turn or stand-on mower. The tub can be dumped forward, and the entire cart can be lifted vertically on the mower to take up as little space as possible on the trailer.

“We think this is going to have a major impact on the industry. There are a lot more smaller guys than bigger guys,” Carlson said. “One of the pushbacks on the Kart Mate is that it’s a commercial-built piece of equipment. It’s not small, it’s heavy duty and is meant to take a beating. So, it’s going to be on the higher end as far as price.”

Kart Mate Residential is a one-wheel apparatus that goes on the front of the mower. It has the same connection point as Kart Mate Commercial, and it comes in at under \$1,000, where the other unit is at \$1,899. Users can get the articulation out of it like Kart Mate commercial, and the unit can stand straight up in the air in transport mode so that it doesn’t eat up any extra space in the trailer.

While Kart Mate weighs in at 135 pounds and is shipped by freight, Kart Mate Residential is 58 pounds and is shipped via UPS.

An additional feature of Kart Mate Residential is users can pull a simple hitch pin that unfolds handles and legs, transforming it into a wheelbarrow.

“You can drive 500 feet with your mower so you’re not wearing yourself out, stop, unfold these handles and legs, which is simply pulling a pin and it comes off, and you can walk off with the wheelbarrow,” Carlson said. “In Maryland, 9 million yards of mulch are laid every year, in just this state alone. A yard of mulch is roughly 600 or 700 pounds. That’s a lot of liability, back strain and potential soft tissue injuries. The work can be made easier with this product.”

» **RECRUITMENT TOOL** Mulch Mate said its products can help entice workers as they reduce strain and make tough jobs easier to perform.





» **A MOVING BILLBOARD** Graham Spray Equipment showed off an Isuzu truck with one of its enclosed units — a standard rig with aluminum walls.

In addition to making crews more efficient, Carlson said Mulch Mate products may help landscape companies with retention issues as well.

"I have customers tell me stories that they have people coming out of the woodwork wanting to work for them (because) they have a Mulch Mate or Kart Mate," Carlson said.

GOING OUT IN STYLE

Before my "What if?" GIE+EXPO concluded, I checked out the new gear at Arborwear's booth. The company is introducing two new high-visibility safety apparel (HVSA)

Class 3 Outerwear styles: the Kenston Jacket (a cold weather bomber style coat) and the Juniper Softshell Jacket.

These two items complete a line of HVSA Class 3 offerings from the apparel manufacturer, based in Chagrin Falls, Ohio. Options include mesh vests, short and long sleeve shirts or polos, single- and double-

» **SAFETY FIRST**
Visible colors and reflective tape ensure workers can be seen when wearing Arborwear gear.



Continued on page 26

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VISITS WITH JACTO, GREENE COUNTY FERTILIZER, QUALI-PRO AND MORE

BY CHRISTINA HERRICK
LM EDITOR

The 2020 “What if?” GIE+EXPO show got off to a fast start for me when I met with Jacto President Greg Imus at the LM booth. He said he will miss visiting the Brazilian restaurant in downtown Louisville this year, since Jacto is a Brazilian company.

“I think that a show like this is more than just the product and more than just presenting the product,” he said. “It’s a gathering of people in the industry.”

Imus said this year has been unlike anything the company has seen before, and last year was a

record year for backpack sprayers.

“This year, while it’s had a tremendous number of challenges for a lot of people and a lot of businesses, for our business, it’s been a year of opportunity,” he said. “We have sold more backpack sprayers this year than in the history of Jacto.”

Imus noted the popularity of the company’s backpack sprayers is a testament to how the green industry is faring during a global pandemic and an indication that many lawn and landscape companies have expanded into additional service offerings such as disinfecting services.

“The green industry people we talked to are having a very good year,” he said. “You even have some of them that are buying sprayers and doing some additional hardscape-type work and some indoor work in terms of spraying surfaces that have never sprayed in the past.”

Jacto debuted the 4-gallon PJB-16 and 5-gallon PJB-20 backpack sprayers and 4-gallon DJB-16 and 5-gallon DJB-20 dosers with a drenching tip. These sprayers use a rheostat adjustable resistor-type controller to offer fingertip pressure adjustments to pressure and volume. They come equipped with a rechargeable lithium-ion battery. The

battery run times average between eight to 12 hours, depending on flow rates and pressure.

“Our sprayers pump easily, but with a battery operator, you’re not having to pump at all,” Imus said. “We’re getting approximately 30 to 35 tanks of spraying between charges. In the case of our sprayers, landscapers say they go weeks without charging up the batteries. They’re very

» SPRAY AWAY

Jacto’s PJB-16 4-gallon backpack sprayer is new this year and comes equipped with a rechargeable lithium-ion battery.



PHOTO: GREENE COUNTY FERTILIZER CO.



BOOTH TIME
Greene County Fertilizer highlighted the company's new early order program and the addition of more herbicides, fungicides and insecticides to its portfolio.

efficient, they don't leak and you have a lot of autonomy with the batteries."

ON TO THE MASSIVE TRADE SHOW FLOOR

When I visited with John Perry, president, CEO and founder of Greene County Fertilizer, he said he's watched how the GIE+EXPO show has grown in the decade that

Greene County Fertilizer has exhibited at the show.

"Coming out of 2019 was a spectacular year," Perry said. "2020 started off real strong, and then news broke, and things changed. But, it seemed like the lull didn't last very long. We have had an absolute record year this year. It's grown unbelievably."

Perry attributed a lot of Greene County Fertilizer's success to a returned focus on home improvements for consumers.

"For the most part, aside from maybe a few stories I've heard, the professional lawn care companies have grown and surged dramatically as well," he said. "We did come into a bit of fear in March, but it's been short-lived, and it's been pedal to the metal since."

As a direct-to-consumer company, Greene County Fertilizer has expanded its offerings to now include herbicides, fungicides and insecticides to complement the fertilizers the company had previously offered.

"This year, we've expanded the catalog considerably to add more products and give more options to the applicators," he said.

Greene County Fertilizer's early order program (EOP) was another GIE+EXPO talking point.

"We're really focused on helping to build a robust program for operators, giving something people can plan on so they're able to move through the season," Perry said. "We're

Continued on page 28

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Continued from page 27

taking a lot of the guesswork out of their program.”

Perry said business owners need to be looking to the future now to build for success.

“This was the year to bring your business into the 21st century and learn how to communicate with people differently,” he said. “Learn how people are shopping and buying lawn care. 2021 has the opportunity to be an absolutely stellar year.”

Before I left, Perry took a moment to tip his hat to his customers and our readers for weathering the storm of 2020.

“To everybody out there in the industry, way to go. Way to make it through 2020 and way to be set up to be in a better position for 2021,” he said. “The grass is going to keep growing, and it’s just going to keep on needing mowing. I think we’re all going to be just fine.”

AFTERNOON MADNESS

Then, I spoke with Nick Strain, business director of Control Solutions and Quali-Pro. He said a key focus of this year’s GIE+EXPO is the introduction of Quali-Pro’s Expel,



» **QUART SIZE**
Quali-Pro’s Expel is a postemergent herbicide available in quart-sized packages.

a sulfentrazone post-emergent herbicide for yellow nutsedge, purple nutsedge and green kyllinga. What’s new about Expel, Strain said, is the sizes the herbicide is available in.

“We’re packing it down into quarts, which will make it more convenient for the lawn care owner,” he said.

Quali-Pro also promoted Doxem IG, a granular indoxacarb and novaluron mole cricket bait. The product does not require personal protective equipment (PPE) for applications in landscape beds, vegetation, mulched areas or as a boundary treatment around buildings.

Strain said Quali-Pro also revamped its Quali-Pro Academy, an incentivized self-guided product training program for lawn care operators (LCOs). Those who complete the training modules and score 80 percent or better on quizzes can earn a \$50 gift card.

“This year, we’re going to update it with some new videos and new products — a fresh look at Control Solutions and Quali-Pro,” he said.

Lastly, Strain said another focus is the company’s EOP program, Simply Grow Together.

“It focuses more on the lawn care operator this year because it pays on all products that qualify,” he said.

LAST DAY OF THE SHOW

Highlighting the products that are within Nufarm’s portfolio was a key talking point at the company’s booth, said Dave Biegacki, customer and brand manager for turf and ornamentals for Nufarm.

“We really needed to take a break and focus on the benefits and uniqueness of these products,” he said. “A combination of Sure-Guard SC and Cheetah Pro saves labor by giving fast, nonselective kill

» **A NICE SPREAD**
Spyker’s Ergo-Pro SPY100 winter spreader offers a 100-pound funnel-shaped hopper and lifetime-warrantied 13-by-5-inch pneumatic tires.

Continued on page 30



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Continued from page 28

with extended residual. This saves labor with fewer applications and ultimately makes the LCO's customer happier with the premium results."

Biegacki said sedges and kyllinga were a hot topic this year among lawn care service providers because many areas struggled with control.

"We have done many new trials and have found that a recent product Celero completely translocates within the plant and actually kills sedges and kyllinga," he said.

The company also highlighted how plant growth regulators can help lawn care service providers by reducing inputs and mowing.

"We are developing solutions with Anuew that result in fewer mowings, less watering and solutions to remove *Poa* from fescue," he said.

Biegacki said another highlight of the GIE+EXPO/Louisville experience is the Nufarm party at Bourbon Row.

"Every year, our party gets bigger as we interact with so many customers at the show," he said.

I had time for one more stop before heading back to the booth to help the team break it down, and that was a quick fly-by with our friends in Kansas City: PBI-Gordon Corp.

The company recently released a new SpeedZone EW Broadleaf Herbicide that features an emulsion-in-water (EW) formulation. This EW



» **NEW HERBICIDE**
PBI-Gordon's SpeedZone EW Broadleaf Herbicide features a smaller particle size.



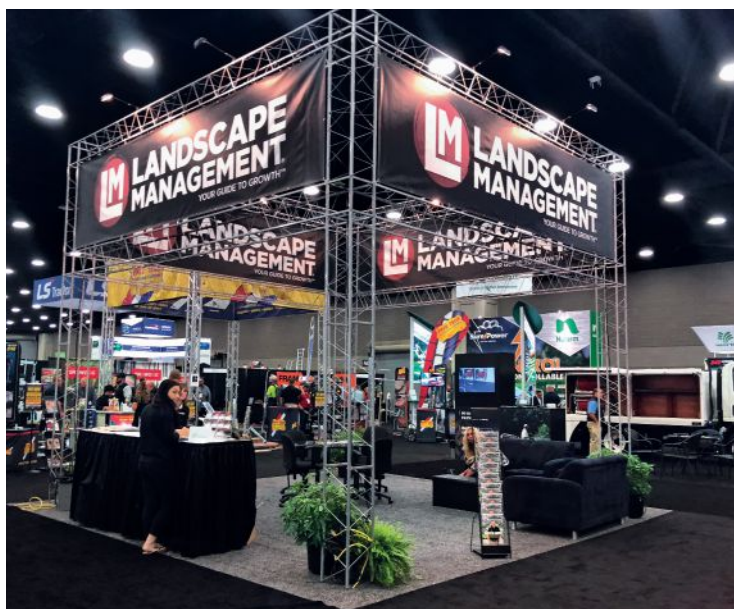
» LABOR SAVER

"A combination of SureGuard SC and Cheetah Pro saves labor by giving fast, nonselective kill with extended residual," said Dave Biegacki of Nufarm at the company's booth.

technology creates a smaller particle size than the other formulation. With smaller particle sizes, more active ingredients affect the leaf surface. The company said there is lower volatile organic content in this formulation, and it is designed for use in low-volume and conventional sprayers. PBI-Gordon's SpeedZone Southern EW Broadleaf Herbicide, designed for southern turfgrasses, has been approved for use in California. SpeedZone Southern EW controls more than 70 tough broadleaf weeds — including dollarweed, ground ivy and spurge.

With that, my GIE+EXPO wrapped up. Time to get back to Cleveland. 📍

PHOTO: LM STAFF



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Chinch bugs be gone

Two lawn care operators explain how they contend with chinch bugs

BY SARAH WEBB | LM ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Chinch bug damage is easy to spot by a color Steven Murray calls “chinch bug orange.”

“It’s a very unique color that the pest creates in the turf grass when it’s dying,” says the Jacksonville, Fla., lawn service manager for McCall Service. “We’ve trained our technicians to identify that and identify thin areas. With chinch bugs, they’re killing the grass in a very fast manner.”

The company has nine branches across the Southeast and provides pest control, irrigation and lawn services to a 70 percent residential, 30 percent commercial clientele.

COMMUNICATION IS KEY

Spotting and controlling chinch bugs comes down to communication — to clients and to technicians, according to Ryan Petitti, director of technical and quality assurance at Westchester, Pa.-based Green Lawn Fertilizing, which provides lawn care, ornamental and pest services to a mostly residential clientele.

“We train our technicians to be watchful July through August,” he says. “While they’re out visiting customers’ properties, we want them to look for areas that appear to be drought stressed because, all too often, chinch bugs are misdiagnosed as drought stress. We look at the environment. Is the area in direct sun? Is there a lot of thatch? Anything over half an

inch of thatch, you have a higher likelihood that it’s chinch bugs.”

He adds that the company coaches its technicians to get down close to the ground to check the border between the stressed turf and the healthy grass because chinch bugs are feeding outward into the healthy grass.

“You’re talking one-fifth of an inch, so (chinch bugs are) very tiny, and you have to get close to see the pattern on the back and the bright white wings, and with the adults, there’s a contrast there as you’re close to the ground looking,” he says.

McCall Service sends out mass communication to its clients, letting them know it’s chinch bug season. They include photos of damage to look for.

“We constantly remind customers, if they see something before we do, don’t hesitate to call us. Don’t wait,” he says. “We’d rather get out there and find it’s nothing than to wait three, four, five, eight weeks and find out it’s something major.”

Petitti says it’s also important to relay to customers what they can do to limit stress in their lawn.

“It’s things like watering practices and mowing,” he says. “We are always trying to coach our customers on proper mowing, mowing at a 3- to 4-inch height, not removing more than a third of the grass blade. These are all things that encourage a healthy grass plant, and if there is insect pressure, the grass has a better ability to bounce back from that pressure.”

McCall Service takes it a step further by letting clients know the company also provides irrigation



services when they educate them about proper watering techniques.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR
Chinch bugs feed outward into healthy grass and can kill turf very quickly.

CONTROL FACTORS

Green Lawn Fertilizing takes a preventive approach to knocking out chinch bugs early.

In mid- to late April, once temperatures hit 50 degrees F or warmer, and the adults emerge from overwintering to lay eggs, the company applies an insecticide with a pyrethroid chemical class, which usually provides a 25-day residual, Petitti says. Five to six weeks later, the company will put down another application.

McCall Service begins the season using insecticides with the active ingredients bifenthrin and imidacloprid or bifenthrin and clothianidin. The company offers a 12-application program and a six-application program.

As with many other pests and diseases, rotating modes of action is important, Murray says.

“If you are not constantly rotating your modes of action throughout not only your growing season but year over year, then you are breeding resistance,” he says. “Chinch bugs gain resistance very, very quickly. So, some of the older chemistries are fully resistant. You can spray them on them, the insect will keep on trucking.” 🐞



Ryan Petitti

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Scientific Plant Service uses early order programs, in part, to keep from worrying about needing to buy more product.

ABCs ON EOPS

Two lawn care operators share their experiences with early order programs and why they've been beneficial

BY SARAH WEBB | LM ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Back in the days when Scientific Plant Service (SPS) in Baltimore was located just up the road from its local supplier, buying into early order programs (EOPs) didn't seem to make much sense.

However, that changed when the supplier moved locations, and SPS took a harder look at where it could save on material costs and cash flow.

"It was very easy for us to work hand to mouth and go to the store and get what we needed," says Brian

Haga, president and owner of SPS. "We never kept our own grass seed at our facility. We would just get it every couple of days or by the week up there."

Since that change about 12 years ago, SPS — which provides plant health care, lawn care, athletic turf care, aquatic weed control and wildlife services to a 50 percent residential and 50 percent commercial clientele — digs into its books each September and October to see how it can take

Continued on page EOP4

Continued from page EOP3

advantage of the savings offered by EOPs. The company typically orders its insecticides, herbicides, fertilizers and nutritional products through EOPs.

"EOPs became a better way to run our business because now it's not on someone's mind that they have to get materials," Haga says. "The materials are on the shelf. It's a lot easier to work from the inventory rather than have to figure out where the inventory is coming from on a daily or weekly basis. At first, it was simply about the savings on materials, and then on top of that was for cash flow. We got to spread those purchases out over the next season to be able to buy almost seven or eight months in advance and not pay for it for a while."

Landscape Management spoke with Haga and Mark Leahy, president of Blades of Green, a 99 percent residential lawn care and tree care firm in Edgewater, Md., to find out what lawn care operators (LCOs) need to know about these programs.

LEARN THE GAME

Leahy compares EOPs to a game.

"There are a lot of moving parts, and it's a whole process just to figure out the best deals and what you have to buy, how much of it you have to buy, the total dollar amounts," he says. "It's a big game. You have to study the game."



Taking advantage of early order programs requires management to take a step back from the field.

He adds it's important to ask when suppliers will make delivery, when they will require payment and how much of a discount they're going to give.

Leahy says Blades of Green has been up on the game of EOPs for nearly three decades, and it uses them for most of its products, including pre- and postemergent herbicides, fungicides and fertilizers.

"It makes us more efficient because you're not calling your supplier every other week," Leahy says. "You already have it, and you know what you're going to use. You just track your uses to make sure you're on target, so if you have a good spring and you run out of material, you want to be able to order that and have it on hand."

To most effectively take advantage of early order programs, Leahy cautions that it requires planning ahead and considering logistics, such as storage.

"You have to think, 'Can I store that much, or can my supplier keep it for me at his warehouse and have it available when I need it?'" Leahy says. "I've been here at my company for 31 years. I just remember when we were in a horse barn, that was our first shop, stacking fertilizer in December up to the ceiling because we were saving \$4 a bag."

Haga adds that for companies that don't have an abundance of storage space, some suppliers may be able to warehouse some of those materials.

"We might not take delivery on some of these things until the following March or April, so we're simply just buying it on paper, and when we need it, we call, and they deliver it," Haga says.

PLAN AHEAD

One of the biggest hang-ups with EOPS for LCOs, Haga says, is they have to figure out what they're doing for the following year as early as September and October.

"Those are probably everybody's busiest revenue months of the year — October is traditionally our highest revenue month," Haga says. "There are a lot of moving pieces to get that work done during the month, and now you have to take people away from management and sit down in front of spreadsheets to figure out what they're going to use 12 months from now, while in the front of their

mind, they're still trying to figure out what they're doing 12 minutes from now."

To streamline the process, SPS keeps precise records each year to forecast its order for the next. It inputs the square footage of each property, job counts and material use rates into a formula to figure out how much product it will need. It typically orders enough materials to get it through Aug. 15 of the following year. The company then has at least one visit from its distributor to sit down and talk about the programs.

"All the distributors usually have their own little sideline programs as well that offer some additional discounts or warehousing or terms," Haga says.

Leahy agrees. "I always tell guys just because they're not offering something doesn't mean you can't ask it," he says. "We've gone back to suppliers and said, 'We want to buy four truckloads of this,' and some will say, 'If you commit, I'll store it for you.' We meet with all our suppliers probably twice, and we go back at them more than once to ask them to tighten a number up. Make them work for your business. We have three or four main suppliers, and they all work really hard for us."

Leahy says companies also need to consider how much they plan to grow the following year.

"If you're planning on growing, you need to add that into your number of what you might need," he says. "That's the tricky part; you don't want to end up with too much product. On the other side, we don't want to end up with not enough and have to go buy more and pay more for it. However, we've made mistakes, and it's never going to be perfect."

To get the best deal, companies should put their order in by the earlier EOP deadlines in October.

SO, WHY COMMIT?

While the planning process may be a headache, Haga says at the end of the day, EOPs are worth the hassle.



"Is it a pain to sit down and do it? Yes, because there are other things you want to focus on because the time clock is ticking for fall," he says. "It can be a bit of a gamble, but I think the savings and the efficiency are worth it."

By using EOPs, Haga says his company has achieved between 5 and 10 percent savings by locking in the current season's prices and receiving the kickbacks for buying early.

Leahy notes that using EOPs has helped his company get a better grip on cash flow.

"You can gauge your cash flow, which is good especially in the lawn care industry when most companies aren't going to have a lot of money coming in through the winter," he says. "A lot of times, you can early order and save money and then defer your payments until June and July or even October, so that can help you make it through the lean times of year when you don't have much money coming in."

He adds, "You're in business to make money, so if you can save 1 percent off your material costs, that can be huge, but if you can save 3 or 4 percent, that's just more money for you and more money you can put back into the business or (give) to your employees." 📌

Keeping a record of how much product is used each year helps forecast for the following year.

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\$10,000 to < \$20,000	6%	
\$20,000 to < \$30,000	7%	
\$30,000 to < \$40,000	8%	
\$40,000 +	9%	



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Deadline: Oct. 1, 2020 – Feb. 26, 2021
Website: GreenTrust365.com/Lawn

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Pallet	up to 9%	up to 2%	3%	up to 10%	—	up to 24%

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TIPSHEET

The do's and don'ts of dollar spot management

Experts share what lawn care operators should and shouldn't do when it comes to treating this tricky disease **BY CHRISTINA HERRICK | LM EDITOR**



Dollar spot is a turf disease that can strike cool-season and warm-season grasses alike. To help properly treat dollar spot, *Landscape Management* spoke with Brian Aynardi, Ph.D., Northeast research and development scientist with PBI-Gordon; Mike Agnew, Ph.D., technical services manager with Syngenta; and Ian Rodriguez, Ph.D., technical services manager for Quali-Pro.

DO

DO USE A DISEASE MODEL. “Keep an eye on the weather forecast and use the Smith-Kerns Dollar Spot Prediction model. Any time warm daytime temps, high relative humidity, cloudiness and cool night temperatures are predicted, the dollar spot pathogen is likely to be active. Even if preventive applications are not desired by clients, following the weather will allow turfgrass managers to scout in a timely manner and look for the first signs (*aerial mycelia*) of the pathogen and symptoms (tan lesions with brown borders) of the disease so that they can convey the need for a fungicide application to the client.” – Aynardi



Brian Aynardi

DO FOCUS ON FERTILITY. “Maintaining a steady nitrogen supply during the season is important to avoid the issue. There are some very good, slow-release fertilizer technologies readily available to lawn care operators today that can be an effective approach without requiring frequent applications.” – Rodriguez



Ian Rodriguez

DO READ LABELS. “There are a number of fungicides listed for dollar spot control. Some fungicides may only be listed for commercial landscapes, so take care to review labels for proper use locations prior to application. Representative fungicide groups are the succinate dehydrogenase inhibitors, demethylation inhibitors and benzimidazoles. Active ingredients labeled for residential and commercial applications are isofetamid, myclobutanil and thiophanate-methyl.” – Aynardi

DO REDUCE THATCH. “Reducing thatch by lawn aeration or dethatching will be beneficial in the long run by preventing much of the root system growing in the thatch layer. Irrigate the lawn frequently enough to maintain good soil moisture when the disease is active.” – Agnew

DO THINK ABOUT PREVENTION. “Make preventive applications, which may work significantly better than curative applications.” – Agnew

DON'T

DON'T NEGLECT CULTURAL PRACTICES. “Cultural practices are typically a means of prevention rather than a curative approach.” – Rodriguez

DON'T WATER AT NIGHT. “Excessive leaf moisture that persists for an extended period of time is critical in the disease cycle of a variety of turf pathogens. Secondary to this would be areas that see minimal sunlight due to tree and shrub growth and have minimal air movement for the same reason. These areas do not dry out as well as the rest of the lawn, and as a consequence, pathogens are first noticed in these locations.” – Aynardi

DON'T JUST BLAME FERTILITY. “Dollar spot is frequently described as a disease of poorly nourished turf. However, when a susceptible turfgrass cultivar is present, dollar spot can be destructive even if the lawn receives adequate fertility.” – Agnew



Mike Agnew

DON'T WAIT. “Whenever possible, chemical applications should be deployed prior to disease development. Cultural strategies should be employed throughout the growing season, but proper fertility and attempts to increase air movement should be in place by the time environmental conditions are conducive for disease development.” – Aynardi

DON'T PANIC. “In the case of dollar spot, most healthy lawns can tolerate or simply outgrow the damage caused by the disease so that it does not reduce the aesthetic value.” – Rodriguez

PROTECT YOUR TURF

A turf tamer

Lawn care operators discuss how humates help give turf better color and root growth

BY ABBY HART | LM SENIOR EDITOR

In 2018, Jake Johnson was looking for a way to improve his clients' yards and increase the nutrient uptake in the grass. The owner of Spray Tech Solutions in Blackfoot, Idaho, says high-pH soils are typical in the Idaho desert, and the soil, in combination with high-pH water, wasn't getting the results he wanted. His distributor recommended that he apply humates.



Jake Johnson

"We've noticed that humates have helped the plant have more access to the nutrients in the soil and giving better blade color. And, we're getting longer-lasting results in between treatments as well, and our grass is really thick," he says.

Johnson adds that humates also have been improving his clients' cool-season grasses with overall better plant health, deeper root growth and helping the soil not be as hard and compacted.

Spray Tech Solutions has \$400,000 in revenue and provides 70 percent lawn care, 20 percent ground sterilants and 10 percent pest control to a 90 percent residential clientele.

PLANT PROTECTOR

Jim Beveridge, owner of Yards Done

Right in Westlake, Ohio, a \$225,000, 100 percent residential lawn care operation, has been using humates for eight years to combat carbon loss. "We have so much carbon loss on our soils, not just in Ohio, but everywhere else ... we're trying to actually help the soils," he says. "The humic acid is what's called a chelator — it actually helps (nutrients) get into the plant better. This is what we discovered after applying it with our fertilizer and our insecticide: If you're putting fertilizer down with humic, it actually helps the fertilizer be more effective."

Beveridge uses humic acid, specifically humates with kelp, which he says help build and thicken the cell walls of the plant and help the plant be more disease and insect resistant. "We're also seeing quicker recovery from drought and stress," he adds.

A GOOD SOURCE

In Beveridge's case, when sourcing product, his company prices it in thousand-square-foot increments — and humates are relatively inexpensive. "Fertilizer that doesn't have any amendments could cost you \$1 per thousand square feet. The products I'm using with fertilizer and humic acid are around \$1.25 per thousand square feet," he says.

Johnson advises lawn care operators to ask their distributors from where

their humic acid is derived. "I think one problem (with humates) is it's not under the same regulations that a lot of our pesticides and herbicides are under," he says. "I think just trying to find a good supplier that has good quality humates is a key factor."

IN THE FIELD

As far as applying humates, Beveridge mixes humates in all of his six liquid fertilizer applications himself.

He combines humic acid with his regular fertilizer mix, which typically includes fertilizer, kelp and sometimes micronutrients like boron, zinc and iron.

Back in Idaho, due to the dry climate, Johnson mixes a 24 percent concentration of humic acid in his liquid fertilizer applications two to three times a year, first in May and then midsummer. He'll do a late summer application if the yard is still struggling with holding moisture.

Johnson says humates are cost effective on larger yards, and most of his clients' yards are an acre or larger. He says that to run humic acid on one-acre lawns adds \$7 to \$14 per application, depending on the rate. "Meanwhile, we're able to justify the 15 percent increase in pricing due to adding humates," he says, "and hopefully it gives us an edge over our competitors."

"It's been a learning experience, testing it to see how it works," Johnson says. "We're really happy with our product, and we're getting great results." 🌱



Jim Beveridge

BUSINESS BOOSTERS

Hoses and nozzles and reels, oh my!

Lawn care experts disclose how companies can best choose spray equipment for their operation

BY SARAH WEBB | LM ASSOCIATE EDITOR

When it comes to purchasing spray equipment, there are several factors lawn care operators (LCOs) should consider. They include what type of work they will be performing and their desired flow rate.

"A lot of people have different ways they like to operate, so if you have a lot of different types of grasses that you treat, then you want to get a multiple-tank or multiple-compartment spray unit," says Dave Arnett, sales manager at Graham Spray Equipment. "That way, you can carry all of your products and treat all of your different grasses that day, and you can set up your route based on geography and not based on what you're carrying with you."

LM spoke with Arnett; Rhett Clark, president and owner of Gregson-Clark Spraying Equipment, and Reynolds Cook, owner of Southern Lawns, to find out what other factors weigh in to choosing the right spray equipment. Southern

Lawns is an 85 percent residential and 15 percent commercial lawn care and pest control firm in Auburn, Ala., Montgomery, Ala., and Columbus, Ga.

SPRAY GUNS

When thinking about the type of spray guns to purchase, Clark notes that lawn spray guns typically produce large droplets with low drift in either a showerhead or flat-fan pattern. Nozzle selection depends on the desired application rate.

On the other hand, tree spray guns have an adjustable spray pattern to enable effective spraying of tall trees as well as shrubs and ornamental plants. While multiple gun and nozzle options are available, it's key that the gun be properly matched to the pump, reel and hose for maximum efficiency.

"When we're setting up a rig, we equate 1,000 square feet to one minute," Arnett says. "When the customer calibrates how much comes out of the gun in one minute compared to 1,000 square feet, that's a common calibration technique we use in the industry."

HOSES

Hose selection often depends on the desired flow rate, products being used, working pressure and types of areas being sprayed, Clark says.

He adds that spray hoses range from 3/8-inch

up to 3/4-inch in diameter, with working pressures up to 800 psi. Common lengths are 300 feet or 400 feet.

"For lawn spraying, 3/8-inch in diameter can be used if the desired flow rate is under 2 gallons per minute (gpm). For rates more than 2 gpm, 1/2-inch in diameter is typically used," Clark says. "A 600-psi hose is common for lawn spraying, and an 800-psi hose is most often used for high-pressure tree spraying."

Cook says his company uses a rubber half-inch hose. "It's a durable hose but more lightweight than some of the other ones," he says. "We're generally using a 400-foot hose, which, for the most part, covers all of our needs."

REELS

Reel selection often depends on the size and length of the hose being used.

Many hose reels used in lawn and tree care feature a 12-volt rewind, which is powered from the vehicle battery, but less expensive manual reels are also available for lighter-duty work, Clark says.

"We use a Hannay reel that has an electric reel up on the hoses, which is a lot more effective than manually reeling up a hose," Cook says. 



SWITCH IT UP
Sprayers often feature an adjustable spray pattern so technicians can effectively spray trees, shrubs and ornamentals.



Type of work and desired flow rate are two factors that weigh into choosing spray equipment.

THE BIG ONE

An amusing site

LOCATION Bowie, Md.

COMPANY Ruppert Landscape

DETAILS Ruppert Landscape has been responsible for planting, upkeep and mowing at this Six Flags America amusement park for more than 10 years.

"It's literally in our backyard; it's less than 15 minutes from our office," says Matthew Davidson, area manager for Ruppert Landscape.

It's a direct-report site for three to five employees most of the year. In February, the company uses a big mulching event as a training area to get the park ready for its spring break opening.

The park boasts more than 270,000 square feet of bed space across 60-plus flower beds. To manage the workload, the team breaks up the park into different sections.

"So, if bad weather impacts our day, we are able to switch gears to work on other areas or tasks," Davidson says. "With strong communication, the park staff is always aware of what areas we're working in."

Davidson says one of Ruppert's philosophies is to focus first on a site's detailing, such as weeding or pruning, and save mowing for the end. However, it makes an exception at Six Flags. "Because we have such a short window on mowing, we do the mowing first so when the park is open, we can walk through the park and focus on the details," he says.

This project earned Ruppert Landscape a 2019 Gold Award from the National Association of Landscape Professionals' Awards of Excellence program.

See more photos from this project at LandscapeManagement.net/thebigone.



Captions | 1. Appearances are critical for this client, with more than 270,000 square feet of bed space of perennials, annuals, flowering trees, tropical plants, shrubs and mature trees. There is extra scrutiny on the site. Ruppert holds its annual company picnic every two years at the amusement park. **2.** Crews hang water hanging baskets and seasonal rotations daily mid-May through September before the park opens. Site personnel use a 7-foot wand and water truck throughout the park to keep these baskets looking vibrant. **3.** Ruppert's crews pay close attention to the detail work, including blowing and edging nearly four miles of curb line and walkways weekly. **4.** The single and multi-stemmed queen palms and variegated ginger plants provide texture and add a neutral balance to the vibrant oasis of the water park sensory experience. Ruppert replaces the plants annually as the varieties do not survive the winter. **5.** Ruppert selected Chinese fan palm trees for the variety's tolerance to mild cold, pests and disease. Large variegated ginger plants give a tropical feel in a nontropical climate.

PRODUCTS THAT WORK

Robotic mowers



↑ **RMI 422 PC-L AND RMI 632 PC-L LTE-CONNECTED iMOW**

COMPANY: Stihl

URL: StihlUSA.com

Stihl's RMI 422 PC-L and RMI 632 PC-L (pictured) LTE-connected iMow robotic lawn mowers allow users and fleet managers to track progress and customize mowing schedules from their smartphones or computers using the Stihl iMow app, according to the company. The products are available at select dealers nationwide.



RETROFIT SOFTWARE AND KIT FOR AUTONOMOUS MOWERS



COMPANY: Greenzie

URL: Greenzie.com

Greenzie's retrofit software and kit for autonomous robotic lawn mowers adds self-driving to existing zero-turn commercial lawn mowers. The company has partnered with Wright Manufacturing and has been working with Wright for more than a year to continually test and perfect the product. The company will roll out the innovation soon to the commercial landscaping industry.



↑ **AUTONOMOUS ELECTRIC LAWN MOWER**

COMPANY: Graze

URL: GrazeMowing.com

Graze's new lawn mower model is set to hit markets by 2021. The evolution of the first Graze fully autonomous, electric lawn mower increases efficiency and maintenance speed for mid- to large-sized commercial lawns, enhances cutting blades to perfect trim precision, adds new sensor capabilities to increase safety and improves GPS-based mapping and computer vision, while optimizing intelligent and applicable insights through advanced machine learning capabilities, according to the company. Machine learning, coupled with computer vision and a robust system of sensors, allows the commercial lawn mower to map job sites, plan and execute mowing paths and avoid obstacles and dangerous inclines, while continuously collecting and applying data. It's powered completely by electric and solar panel technology.

AUTOMOWER 435X AWD



COMPANY: Husqvarna

URL: Husqvarna.com

The Automower 435X is designed for residential use and can handle slopes up to 35 degrees and mow up to 0.9 acre. Automower 435X AWD models feature technology that optimizes the control of each individual wheel in order to enable excellent operation in the most demanding terrain, according to the company. The Automower produces no direct emissions and delivers the same consistent results 24/7, Husqvarna said.



MAINTAIN YOUR EDGE

Tree tips

Tree care experts share what landscapers should keep in mind when installing and maintaining trees and shrubs

BY SARAH WEBB
LM ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Tree installation and maintenance is no walk in the park. Landscape professionals must consider several factors before adding a tree care branch to their company.

To get a grasp on tree care, *Landscape Management* spoke with Mike Fitzpatrick, vice president of U.S. Lawns, which has more than 250 locations nationwide and ranked No. 12 on the 2020 LM150, and Jeff Englehart, owner and department manager of the tree care division of Cagwin & Dorward, a full-service landscape firm in Petaluma, Calif., that brought in \$48 million in 2019 revenue and ranked No. 41 on the 2020 LM150 list.

Q: WHAT DO LANDSCAPE PROFESSIONALS NEED TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN INSTALLING TREES?

A: JEFF ENGLEHART: The location, size, type of tree and water needs. Water is a big issue out here in California. (You must ensure) the tree has the right irrigation and is in the right location.

MIKE FITZPATRICK: You want to consider what your goal is. You might be looking for something that blooms or doesn't bloom, something that's deciduous or that's evergreen year-round.

You've got to know what horticultural zones things will thrive in. If I were to

TAP AN EXPERT
Having knowledgeable tree care employees on board can help ensure a tree division's success.

plant the wrong tree in the wrong place, it wouldn't last one season. If I've got a tree that requires a lot of moisture, and I put it in an arid environment without irrigation, it's not going to survive.

Local nurseries may have a guide, and there are some apps to tell you where certain plants grow best. You need to know what horticultural zone you're in.

Also, you're always going to want to make sure you know what the tree is going to be like at maturity. A lot of times, a tree may grow a 10-foot-diameter canopy, and they brush up against a building, or they get too tall.

Q: WHAT TYPES OF TREE MAINTENANCE WOULD YOU RECOMMEND LANDSCAPE PROFESSIONALS DO?

A: ENGLEHART: It entails keeping it healthy, whether it's disease and insect control or fertilization. It also entails pruning. A big thing out here, because the properties are smaller in California, they're more jammed together, and you've got trees on top of trees on top of buildings on top of hardscapes. So, there's a lot of potential root issues and the need to be aware of overplanting.

We also follow International Society of Arborist guidelines. The main thing is you have to have the right person and right team in place that has experience working in the industry.


They need to know the right practices to keep trees healthy.

FITZPATRICK: You need to be using proper pruning techniques. We're always looking to remove branches that have disease or insect infestation.

You're also going to want to understand the fertility requirements, so they are being properly fed. When trees are mature, they don't need much, but during their growth phase, they do.

Q: HOW DO YOU MARKET TREE CARE SERVICES TO YOUR CUSTOMERS?

A: ENGLEHART: One of the things we offer companies is that we do everything as one contractor. You have people on-site daily or weekly doing the landscape maintenance and that provides an extra set of eyes on the job. Then, you also have the maintenance guys, installation guys and tree guys all working together, so when we look at somebody's property, we're considering everything. It's not just about the trees or the landscape maintenance or installation; it's about what's best for the property and what's best for the customer's needs.

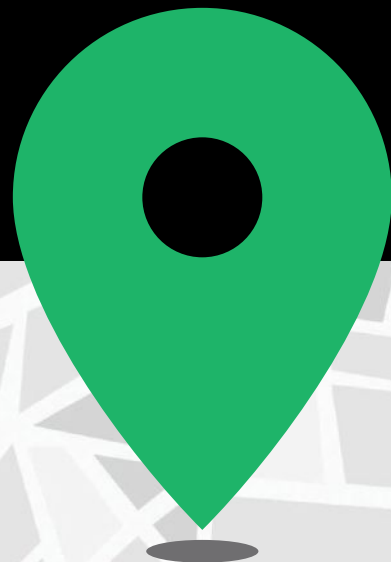
A lot of it is also building a reputation and doing a good job over and over again to make sure customers are happy. It was a natural tie-in because our customers all had trees, and we didn't already offer that service. It's been going well ever since (we incorporated the tree care division in 1999). 





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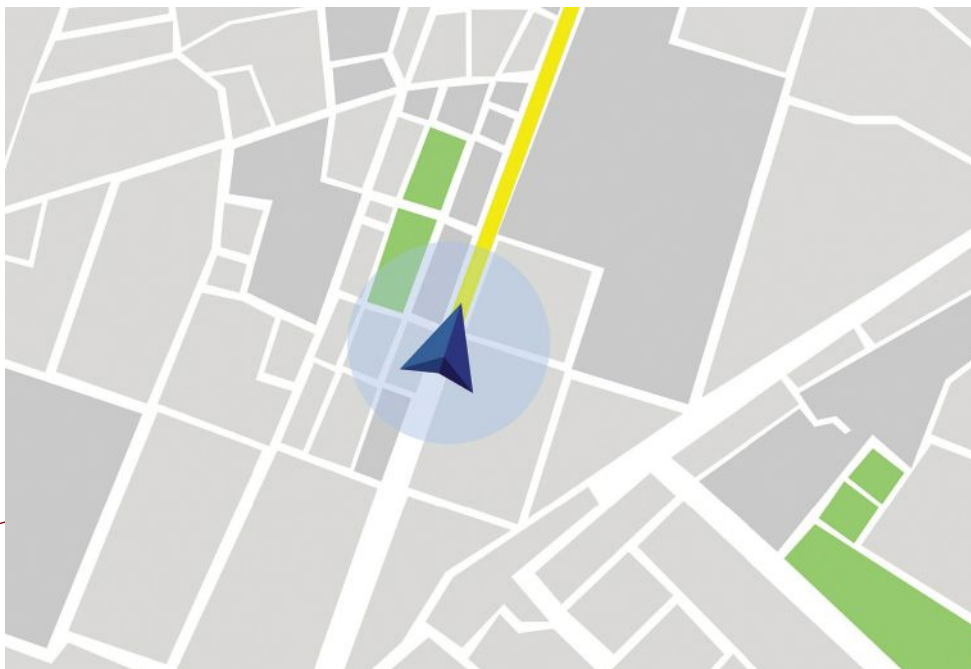
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MARK COHEA
PRESIDENT, SALES &
MARKETING, LDC
MANAGEMENT GROUPS
LULA, GA.

"We've been using Reveal from Verizon Connect for a few years now. My whole company (uses) Verizon. They offered GPS (service) and came out and mounted them in all our trucks, equipment and sales vehicles. It's a good app. It's user friendly and updates rapidly. All my guys know I have it, so they know if they go over the speed limit, we get an alert at the office. We track our time at the job site and compare it with the GPS. We also like the geofencing you can put around a job site — it'll send you an alert when someone pulls into a job and alerts you when they leave the geofence."



EILEEN FALAH
FLEET MANAGER, LANDSCAPE
DEVELOPMENT INC.
VALENCIA, CALIF.

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HARDSCAPE SOLUTIONS

Small sanctuary

LOCATION Bayside, Wis.

COMPANY LandCrafters

DETAILS The client wanted a Japanese-style garden in her backyard. LandCrafters gained the project from a referral and now maintains the property with weekly mowing, landscape care, spring and fall cleanups and snow removal.

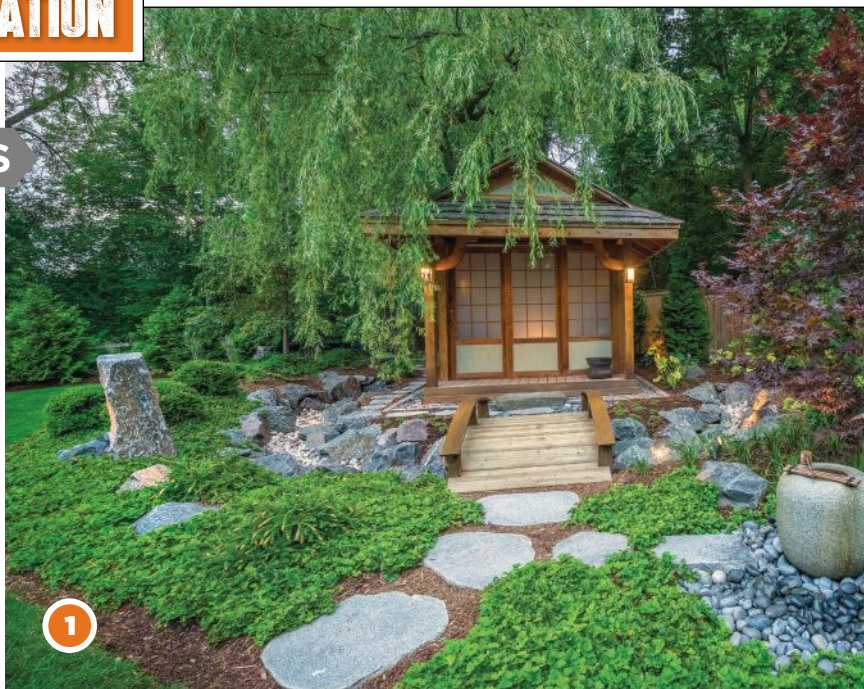
A major challenge, says Michael Manke, landscape architect for LandCrafters, was access to the small 150-foot-wide by 90-foot-deep backyard. LandCrafters used a New Holland skid-steer loader and hand labor. Crews used slings and a Bobcat mini excavator to move larger pieces like ornamental boulders.

Features include an imported Natsume granite basin and Kotoji stone lantern, a 10-foot by 12-foot tea house designed by architect David Miller and a rock garden. The patio, porch and walkway feature irregular bluestone. Aqua blue granite boulders and a gravel dry stream bed create the illusion of water. Manke says color is subtle and isn't always used in an authentic Japanese garden. "You have to structure the plant material so only certain plants are blooming at certain times," he says.

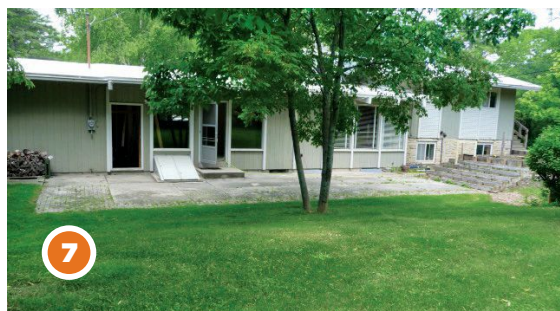
The homeowner entertains guests frequently, so LandCrafters installed the FX Luminaire Luxor system with 65 fixtures. LandCrafters addressed drainage issues by redesigning the pitch of the backyard and connecting downspouts and a sump line to drainage tiles and creating swales.

This project earned LandCrafters a 2019 Silver Award from the National Association of Landscape Professionals' Awards of Excellence program.

See more photos from this project at [LandscapeManagement.net/hardscapesolutions](https://www.LandscapeManagement.net/hardscapesolutions).



PHOTOS: LANDCRAFTERS



Captions | 1. The imported Natsume cleansing basin, arching wood bridge, dry stream bed and plants with rich green textures accent the tea house exterior. An existing willow hangs overhead. 2. A 48-inch-tall Kotoji stone lantern bridges the dry stream bed area. A Caesar's Brother Siberian iris and a Bloodgood Japanese maple frame the view to the tea house. 3. Hostas, pachysandra, sedges and boxwood surround the main patio. 4. An FX Luminaire Luxor system down lights the stone garden. Raked gravel represents ripples in water. Custom bamboo fencing creates walls to the garden. 5. This before photo shows overgrown plants and a basic stoop and walkway. 6. The bluestone patio, bridge and stone steppers direct you to the tea house. Fu dogs on the bluestone pedestals flank the entrance to the deck. 7. Prior to renovation, the back patio was simple. LandCrafters kept the ash trees. 8. The south side yard is the main path into the Zen garden. LandCrafters incorporated the old apple tree into the design because of its sculptural qualities. The path is custom granite steppers.

DESIGN TRENDS

2020 in landscape design

Experts from across the country weigh in on how NALP's 2020 design trends fared with clients and projects.

BY CHRISTINA HERRICK | LM EDITOR

Earlier this year, the National Association of Landscape Professionals (NALP) unveiled its official list of the top lawn and landscape trends for this year. Dan DeGrush, senior landscape architect with Lifescape Colorado in Denver; Andy Blanchford, CEO of Blanchford Landscape Group in Bozeman, Mont.; and Alex Nickens, co-owner of Nickens Lawn & Landscape in New Athens, Ill., break down the trends and share how they panned out for their company's 2020 projects.

1 ORNATE, GEOMETRIC HARDSCAPING PATTERNS in walkways, patios, retaining walls and fire features.

Nickens says intricate patterns are something his company has done with hardscaping, regardless of trends, to set his company apart.

However, DeGrush says he has noticed a bigger push for ornate and geometric hardscaping patterns.

"I do think that's a trend," he says. "It does keep tending to go that way. I don't know if we're entirely there yet, but it's making a push in that direction."

2 CONTEMPORARY AND TRANSITIONAL LANDSCAPE DESIGN with sleek and simple designs and multiseason functionality.

Blanchford cites the influence of mountain modern architecture on elements he's pulled into landscape design.

"We introduced some elements such as bits of steel and steel planters that have

clean and simple lines," he says. "We're trying to pull in the feel of that modern aesthetic, but it's not totally appropriate to the natural landscape."

Transitional outdoor living spaces with fireplaces and grills are popular in Montana, Blanchford says.

Nickens says he's seen a push for transitional spaces with his clients, and more than 60 percent of the hardscapes installed this year have included fire pits.

"Our theory is everyone has been at home so much with COVID-19," he says. "They're basically stuck at their house. I think people are just trying to expand their outdoor living to where they have a place to go within their property. They don't have to sit inside all the time. They can spend some time outside."

DeGrush says he's noticed clients with traditional brick homes want a contemporary landscape.

"It's kind of a simplification of things," he says. "Your lawn, rather than being this curving type of thing, it's got more of a simple geometric shape."

He says plantings are more gridlike in intention with big groupings of plants, such as 15 grass plants next to a grid of

20 black-eyed Susans, next to another block of plantings.

3 BOUNTIFUL SHADES OF BLUE.

"Color trends are hard," DeGrush says. "I see everything (with my clients)."

He says clients want everything from plantings with a lot of color to variegated gardens with only white and green plants. Most of that comes down to client preference.

4 GARDEN DESIGN WITH EDIBLE ELEMENTS.

"The idea of it may be more attractive

than the reality of it," Blanchford says of edible plants in landscape design.

He says he advocates for edible or fruiting trees, but, often, a fruiting cherry tree may attract birds or is messy.

DeGrush, too, says he's noticed for several years more clients have had an interest in gardens with edible plants or even vertical gardens.

"Vertical gardens sound awesome, they look cool, but when you get into making it functional and the water-proofing and the irrigation, a lot of times, people back off," he says.

"I hear (requests for) 'low maintenance' more than I hear anything else."

Nickens says his company has had more requests for apple tree installations. He's also noticed more vegetable gardens on properties his company manages.

"Seeing so many different properties and homes, (we're) definitely seeing a lot of new gardens that weren't there previously," he says.

5 ONE-CLICK, REMOTE IRRIGATION.

DeGrush says operating an irrigation system remotely or via smartphone is something he's seeing for residential clients in Colorado.

For example, after a recent meeting, a client told DeGrush he would get out a hose to address some dry spots in the yard. Instead, DeGrush says, this is a perfect opportunity to "get out your smartphone and hit a button."

A maintenance manager could also turn on or turn off irrigation from anywhere instead of driving to the site to flip a switch.

"That's the beauty of it," he says. "It makes your life so much simpler." 🍷



Dan DeGrush



Alex Nickens

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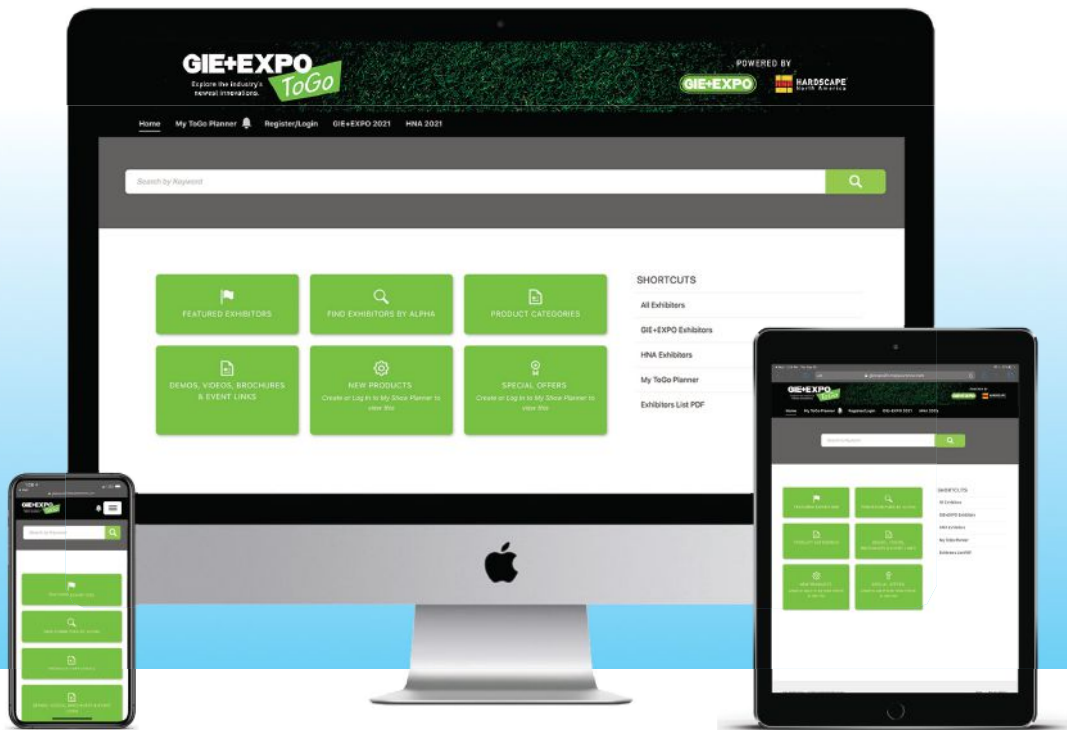
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EXPERTS' TIPS

Compact tractors

WORKHORSES
Compact tractors can be used in a variety of applications, including material handling.



Compact tractor choices

For Scott's Lawn Care near Minneapolis, Minn., incorporating compact tractors into its fleet was a no-brainer.

"We got our first one in 2005, and we've upgraded since then," says Scott Hartmann, president of the company, which provides enhancements, landscape maintenance, lawn care, pest control and snow services for a 50 percent residential, 50 percent commercial clientele in the summer and 80 percent commercial clientele in the winter.

"It's a machine that I wish I would've gotten earlier because we do so much with it," Hartmann says. "We have an attachment for every part of the season."

The company's six Ventrac machines feature articulating four-wheel drive.


The company uses them year-round by incorporating a variety of attachments,

such as snowplows, rough cut mowers, Harley rakes, stump grinders, seeders, aerators, buckets to haul around rock and mulch, leaf cleanup equipment and trenchers.

The company also incorporates dually wheel adaptors on the tractor.

"(Adding those) helps us get into wet and soggy areas and helps us perform services in places that no other tractor can go," Hartmann says.

He adds that the company chose the

tractors because their smaller size means they can go into areas other machines can't; their versatility; and the efficiency they provide because employees only have to use one machine for a variety of applications. 

SNOW PROBLEM →
Scott's Lawn Care uses compact tractors to tackle snow and ice jobs.



PHOTOS: BOBCAT CO.; SCOTT'S LAWN CARE

BOBCAT CO.
Angie Ryan

*Marketing manager,
compact tractors*

"A compact tractor is a do-it-all workhorse for landscapers. With many sizes and configurations on the market, there's a compact tractor to match any work style. Plus, the learning curve is easy. Compact tractors are accessible to all operator levels, whether they are new to tractors or seasoned veterans. Here are seven features to consider when selecting a tractor: tractor size; transmission options; implements and attachments; cab comfort options; power take-off (PTO) types; hitch categories; and tire options. For instance, an open-cab design makes it easy to get on and off the tractor when frequently changing implements or loading materials. Four-wheel drive, a Category 1 three-point hitch and rear PTO for a variety of powerful attachments are also all options to look for in a compact tractor."



CATERPILLAR
Joel Fritts

Marketing professional

"There are several things that need to be considered when selecting a tractor for the landscape business. First, you need to determine the size of the area that will be worked on and the ground conditions. Next, maneuverability is very important in tight working areas, so the steering system is important. Ground conditions are important in determining the type of traction system, whether it is a rubber-tire wheel machine or a track machine. Since they have a larger footprint, track machines work better in soft underfoot conditions and have less ground disturbance. Wheel machines have a smaller footprint and cause greater ground disturbance. Weight is also important in determining how much of a load is expected to be moved with the machine. The weight of the machine is what determines how much load the machine can push or carry. Horsepower determines the rate at which the work can be completed. Generally speaking, for average ground conditions and small loads, a rubber-tire machine is best suited for the work. In poor underfoot conditions, where there is a requirement to push heavy loads, a track-type machine is best suited. Bottom line: it is best to evaluate your overall expectation for working conditions and consult your local dealer for the best solutions."

JOHN DEERE
Ray Gherardini

Product marketing manager

"Landscape professionals should consider their customer mix and the types of jobs they regularly work on to determine the right model for their business. Compact utility tractors are designed to tackle a wide variety of jobs, including transporting materials and earth-moving applications and large mowing work. When determining the best model for you, there are several key things to consider. First, what types of property do you typically work on? The size and terrain of the properties will help determine the appropriate model needed. Second, determine what type of work you expect to be doing. This will help to identify the right engine horsepower, as well as the correct implements for the tasks you are tackling on a regular basis. More likely than not, the property size, type and expected usage will determine a specific type of compact utility tractor."



**COMMERCIAL LANDSCAPE
SERVICE, HUNTSVILLE, ALA.**
Jeremy Brown

President

"We have John Deere 4320, 4420, 4720 compact tractors. It's all the same series, just different horsepower. We use them for every facet of our business. We built our business on those little tractors in the year 2000. We use them for material handling and grading. We primarily use the compact tractor with a Harley rake on the back of it for grading purposes. The weight and the size of the tractor as it pertains to (not) disturbing the grades on existing use sites is why we chose it. It makes us more efficient because traditional landscape projects nowadays will require a compact track loader or rubber-tire skid-steers, but with a compact tractor, we can have a front-end loader on the front and our attachment on the rear, so we can grade or Harley rake a section and use the same machine with that attachment on the front and pick that material up. If you're using other methods, you've got to switch attachments. It's been a reliable piece of equipment and regardless of the model, the small compact tractor has changed the way we do business."

SOFTWARE UPDATE

Smooth by design

Landscape designers share how software is making the design-to-install process smoother

BY ABBY HART | LM SENIOR EDITOR

Landscape designers have tools they use to bring their designs to life, including something as simple as a pencil up to highly sophisticated software. There are many design software products out there, and *Landscape Management*

spoke with Mark Barker, vice president of design and sales at H&M Landscaping in Newbury, Ohio, and David Toda, design/build project manager in Landscape Workshop's Lexington, Ky., location, to find out how software makes their design-to-install process go more smoothly and allow them to deliver for their clients.



Mark Barker

VISUALIZATION

Clients want their finished projects to meet their expectations and align with the design they've understood and agreed upon with their landscape designer and contractor, Barker says. So, it's important that a company's software helps create a design that clients can visualize.

"It comes down to simply how you're able to show the customer your concept and get them to understand it," Barker says. "Because once they understand it, they become comfortable with the

GET THE PICTURE?
Landscape designers often lean on design software that helps clients visualize what the final concept will look like.

project, and that's where you get the emotional side, where they really like it."

H&M Landscaping has \$17 million in revenue and provides 60 percent landscape construction, 20 percent maintenance and 20 percent snow removal to a 60 percent commercial and 40 percent residential client base. Depending on the designer, the H&M design team uses Pro Contractor Studio or Dynascope landscape design software.

Barker says the ability of design programs to import reference images and then create a plant book for the project is a useful tool.

"When we go to present that design to clients, I actually have all the pictures right then and there ready to show," he says. "It's a nice touch."

COMMUNICATION

Toda says design software also helps communication between the design staff and the installation staff at Landscape Workshop. When the designer provides a scaled drawing that's clean, organized and well labeled, it makes the install staff's job easier, he says.

Landscape Workshop is a \$43 million firm headquartered in Birmingham, Ala., specializing in maintenance, lawn care, design/build and irrigation for 90 percent commercial clients. The company's design/build division is based in Lexington, Ky.

The company uses AutoCAD through Land F/X software. "The software allows us to bridge the

gap between designer and contractor and create a finished product that's clean and easy to read for the installation team, but also, we can create very accurate takeoffs quickly," he explains.


ORGANIZATION

"In our traditional design/build format, all our design drawings start out in pen and pencil," Toda says. "Our design software allows us to take those sketches and hand renderings and put them into a program that allows us to very quickly and easily create plant schedules and plant lists."

Overall, Toda says that designing with software goes a long way toward providing a professional and clean end result and gives the contractor a sense of credibility with a client.

He relies on software in particular to help design and organize large-scale jobs, as was the case on a recent project where Landscape Workshop designed a planting plan for a golf course community with several thousand trees.

The software allowed him to break down the golf course hole by hole and create a plant schedule for each hole.

"Doing a job that has that many moving pieces, it's very helpful to have a single source or a program that can do a plant count that large and can help you keep that organized," he says. "It's very easy to lose things or become unorganized very quickly, but if you're using the tools the way they're meant to be used, it really helps that organizational process." 



David Toda



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WATER WORLD

Smart house

LOCATION Winter Haven, Fla.

COMPANY Drip Drop Lawn Care

DETAILS For this residential irrigation installation, the client wanted a smart irrigation system to complement the other components of his “smart house.”

“His house was fully Wi-Fi (enabled),” says Donald Batista, owner of Drip Drop Lawn Care in Winter Haven, Fla. “His light fixtures were controlled by Wi-Fi. All his doors were controlled by Wi-Fi. He also wanted to have a water supply on hand instead of having to water with the hose.”

To ensure the bahiagrass yard and rose beds received sufficient water, a three-man crew installed a dripline in the bed areas, put in Rain Bird 1806 spray heads and Rain Bird rotary nozzles and set up a Rachio smart controller to bring it all under one control center.

One challenge the Drip Drop Lawn Care team encountered was the curvy layout of the 10,000-square-foot property. Batista wanted to avoid overlapping the irrigation elements.

“We wanted to have the hydrozone to where we had all his plant material on the beds watered by the drip line and the turf areas watered by the sprays,” he says.

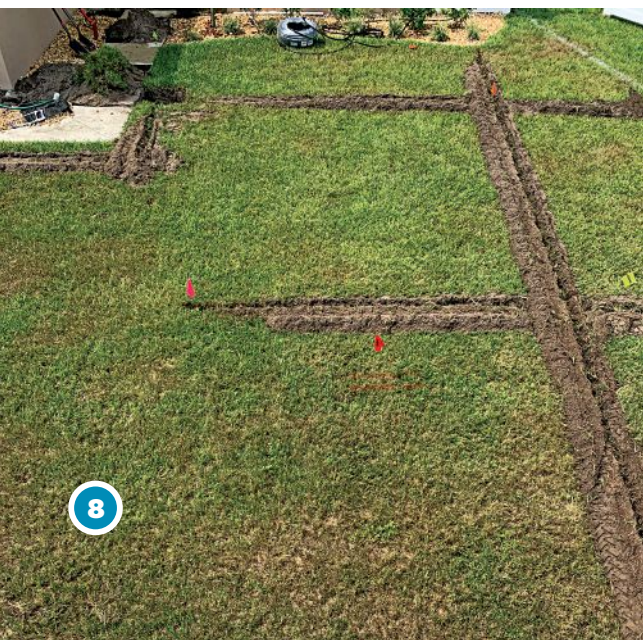
To contend with this issue, the team used an 18-inch hydraulic hand trencher from Barreto to trench around the curves.

All in all, the team completed the job in about eight hours.

See more photos from this project at LandscapeManagement.net/waterworld.



PHOTOS: DRIP DROP LAWN CARE



Captions | 1. The Drip Drop Lawn Care team installed irrigation in the lawn and beds of this 10,000-square-foot property. 2. Overall, this irrigation job took three crew members about eight hours to complete. 3. All of this property's irrigation is managed by a Rachio smart controller. 4. The team used an 18-inch hydraulic hand trencher from Barreto to install the irrigation lines. 5. Drip Drop incorporated Rain Bird nozzles and spray-heads throughout the lawn of the property. 6. The client originally wanted to install an irrigation system to make sure the bahiagrass yard received sufficient water. 7. Drip Drop Lawn Care was careful to avoid overlapping irrigation zones. 8. Overall, Drip Drop Lawn Care incorporated five different irrigation zones into the property.

BUSINESS BOOSTERS

Weather wonders

An expert discusses how to integrate weather-based irrigation control into an irrigation program

BY ABBY HART | LM SENIOR EDITOR

Finding ways to save water is always top of mind for irrigation contractors. Bob Grover, president at Pacific Landscape Management, is a big believer in weather-based irrigation controllers (also known as smart controllers) as a water-saving solution.

“We are huge advocates, not only within our customer base, but also to the industry locally and nationally to have people adopt weather-based irrigation control,” Grover says. “We find it saves 20 to 30 percent (more water than) typical manually operated controllers.”



Bob Grover

The company has promoted weather-based irrigation for over a decade and moved to using Weathermatic weather-based irrigation controllers and software about a year and a half ago.

Pacific Landscape Management is a \$28 million company offering irrigation, landscape maintenance and construction for commercial clients. Here, Grover discusses how he's moving his clients to weather-based irrigation control.

LM: CAN YOU TALK ABOUT THE BENEFITS OF WEATHER-BASED IRRIGATION CONTROL?

GROVER: The cool thing is they are web-based platforms. You have the technology in the cloud and adjust the

programming in the cloud and then it connects to the controller and sends that information down to the controller. So, in addition to being able to have it work in automatic mode, you can access the controller from your cellphone or from your desktop without physically accessing the controller.

The system adjusts daily based on the weather that just happened and gets you accurate, quick changes to water less when you don't need it and water more when you do.

LM: HOW HAVE YOUR CUSTOMERS ADOPTED THESE SYSTEMS ON THEIR SITES?

GROVER: We have aggressively promoted it within our customer base, and we might have 25 percent adoption after promoting it for 10 years. I think there's a little bit of a disconnect sometimes relating to water cost and water increases.

It can be expensive. A typical controller might cost \$500, and these cost \$1,500 to \$2,000. And, you have to buy a weather station. You have to pay for the communication because it's based on a cellphone technology fee (which was \$20 with past weather-based products). It does cost you, but it has a return on investment.

What Weathermatic has done is similar to a lot of other computer technology- and software-related services. They said, “We're seeing trouble with contractors selling it. How about we go to a subscription model?” So, they cover (the controller) and charge the communication fee in their subscription. It




Weather-based irrigation controllers can save up to 20 to 30 percent more water than manual controllers.

also includes the fee to cover the cost of the product, bringing the communication fee to \$40-\$50. So, for double the cost of the previous communication fee, you get all the hardware, and they cover warranty and upgrade for life. We sold about 150 weather-based irrigation systems when we were using a different product. In the first year we offered the subscription-based model, we sold 250.

I believe that on 75 to 80 percent of our properties, it makes financial sense. The smaller the site is, the less water that they use, the less likely you're going to get a realistic return on investment. The bigger the property, the more likely it's going to be a no-brainer.

LM: WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR OTHER IRRIGATION CONTRACTORS LOOKING TO IMPLEMENT THIS WITH CLIENTS?

GROVER: The biggest thing is it's not completely plug and play. You have to tweak the program over the first year or two to get it in fully operational automatic mode.

We're a large enough company that we have a water manager. His entire goal is helping lead and train our people in how to use this technology and other water-saving technologies. Landscaping is becoming more technical, and it's complicated, so you need to be committed to learning and you need to be committed to continuing to learn and to educate your customers. 

PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$

**Check out these solutions to
save time and make more money**

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PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$



AMP Lighting

Q+A with Michael L. Caselnova Jr. Director of Product Development

Why should your business consider offering landscape lighting?

- It's a complementary service to any professional outdoor service such as lawn care, landscaping, irrigation work or any other outdoor professional service.
- It's an excellent source to increase your company revenue. You control your price points and margins.
- Landscape lighting completes any professional outdoor lawn or landscape project.

Why should you consider becoming an AMP PRO?

AMP offers factory direct landscape lighting products for professional contractors. We design, manufacture and distribute the most advanced, durable landscape products in the landscape lighting market today.

- **Do you need to be a licensed electrician?** No – AMP products are low voltage (12V) and no certifications or licenses are needed. It is always best to check with local ordinances.
- **No experience needed:** AMP offers a complete online learning center with detailed product and installation videos, articles and documents.



Why should your business consider offering AMP professional lighting products?

You will gain access to innovative AMP products, expert support and other valuable resources to support your landscape lighting business. Our service offering includes (not limited to):

- **Factory direct, contractor protected pricing:** Easy ordering, fast shipping and you control the price points to your customers.
- **Solid brass construction:** Ensures functionality year after year.
- **UL listings:** Ensure product safety.
- **Lifetime warranty:** AMP offers hassle-free, lifetime warranty protection on our products.
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PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$



Anuvia Plant Nutrients Expands GreenTRX Family of Products

Q+A with **Hugh MacGillivray**
CCO

New Products Feature Flexibility, High Performance, Sustainability

On the market for just over three years, lawn care operators have come to rely on the proven performance and deep greening of the GreenTRX brand. Anuvia Plant Nutrients is introducing an expanded GreenTRX family of products based on the brand's innovative sustainable biobased multi-nutrient technology. The new line up offers unique fertilization options — all with zero filler and zero uncoated urea. Each product utilizes Anuvia's TRX sustainable technology that delivers outstanding performance, improved soil health and a smaller environmental footprint.

"In response to our customers' needs, we've enhanced the nutrient analysis, increased the slow release percent and made the products easier to use in a company's lawn care program," says Hugh MacGillivray, Anuvia's Chief Commercial Officer. "The GreenTRX line-up is an upgrade from most standard fertilizer products

which can contain up to 50% filler and unprotected urea that is prone to nitrogen loss. GreenTRX products are high performance, sustainable, environmentally-friendly and can be used in any program any time of the year at an affordable price."

Innovation Continues with New Products

The new GreenTRX family of products will include products with a nutrient analysis similar to those widely used. The family of products will provide a range of slow release nitrogen options up to 90 days. Every granule will deliver nutrition for improved performance: GreenTRX90, GreenTRX75 and GreenTRX60.

Sustainable Nutrients Make GreenTRX Different

Anuvia's GreenTRX plant nutrition is based upon sustainable technology that upcycles organic materials into fertilizer products. GreenTRX works with the ecosystem, returning organic matter to feed soil microbes and improve soil health. GreenTRX products are bio-based with less leaching and volatility to improve air and water quality and lower GHG. GreenTRX does all this while aesthetically and economically enhancing turf management.

Turf Managers Gain More Flexibility to Customize

Anuvia's new GreenTRX options make it easier for turf managers to design turf nutrition programs using GreenTRX based upon individual situations and environmental conditions. GreenTRX delivers exceptional performance, slow release feeding and quick uniform greening while offering more choices to fit turf managers' business needs.

GREENTRX90

GREENTRX75

GREENTRX60

Better Value for You and Your Customers

With more sustainable GreenTRX products delivering nutrients with advanced formulation technology, lawn care professionals who use GreenTRX will get the job done with a high level of customer satisfaction, easier application and a better outcome for their bottom line and the environment.



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The GreenTRX advantage. The GreenTRX difference.

GREENTRX90 / GREENTRX75 / GREENTRX60



anuviaplantnutrients.com

PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$



Arborgold Software

Q+A with **Jon Garner**
President and CEO

As the industry's leading lawn and landscape business management software, thousands of users turn to Arborgold Software each day to help manage their entire operation while winning more business. Designed by industry experts, sales teams, crews and managers are bidding, winning, tracking and billing hardscape, softscape, maintenance, plant health care and other services with Arborgold's estimating, CRM, marketing, project management, supply chain, and invoicing features.

Why Arborgold:

1. Acquire More Customers:

Arborgold's powerful CRM features give salespeople a competitive edge with sales pipeline management, automated follow-up, customizable bid and proposal templates, an auto price bid calculator, an integrated digital landscape design tool, unlimited lawn measurements, real-time e-messaging and appointment center, batch renewal features and so much more.



2. Save Time and Reduce Operating Costs:

With Arborgold's advanced scheduling and routing, companies can closely monitor direct and indirect costs. Route crews by territory and/or service type, include checklists to help manage jobs, track time on services and document job progress with photos and service notes.

3. Track Time, Projects, and Resources:

As an all-in-one business management software, Arborgold stores employee rates, service rates, vendors data, material costs, equipment costs and overhead recovery rates, resulting in detailed reports by project, job, service line item or business division.

Learn more about Arborgold Software

Find out why Arborgold is the software of choice for the green industry with a one-on-one walkthrough. Get started at arborgold.com/lm.



all-in-one business management software by Arborgold

Find out why today's most successful lawn, landscape, and tree care companies use Arborgold to manage bids, schedule work, route crews, track job costs, manage projects, invoice clients, receive payments, and market their business.

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 for lawn, landscape,
 and tree care
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- ▶ Job, Resource & Project Management
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SALES TEAMS

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 Unlimited Lawn Measurements
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 View Crew GPS in Real-Time
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CURBY HUGHES | CURBY'S LANDSCAPE & NURSERY

PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$



Aspire Software

Q+A with **Mark Tipton**
CEO

How does Aspire landscape management software help users save time, labor, materials and fuel?

Aspire offers true end-to-end functionality designed for landscaping companies, providing users across the entire business with integrated, specialized tool sets that help simplify daily tasks and streamline processes to save time. Information input into the system is immediately accessible by others within the company, eliminating margin for error as well as the need to chase down information. With improved data accessibility and less busy work, staff can work more effectively to accomplish more with their available time, increasing productivity organization-wide.

Aspire's estimating functionality helps ensure accurate proposals are generated quickly and at the right margins. With estimated costs based on actual historical company data, business owners and managers can have confidence they're allocating the right resources to each project. The system also enables users to see what materials are needed across all projects, enabling bulk purchasing for cost savings, if desired. And the materials and equipment required

for each job are visible to crews' mobile devices to help ensure they're prepared for the day when leaving the yard.

With Aspire's flexible, easy-to-use interface, scheduling crews and planning routes to optimize travel time becomes a simple task. The schedule updates immediately so office staff and field crews always have the latest information at their fingertips. Even better, job progress and costs are visible — in real-time — right from the schedule board to help keep projects on time and on budget.

How does Aspire software help generate additional revenue for landscape and lawn care companies?

The Aspire platform supports revenue growth with a CRM that enables accurate tracking of the sales pipeline and funnel, while the system's site audit tool helps uncover enhancement opportunities with existing clients. Even better, the platform's mobile



functionality enables remote users to quickly and easily create and 'win' estimates in the field.

In what other ways does the Aspire platform make landscape firms profitable?

Without an integrated landscape management system, company owners and managers are challenged to access the information they need — when they need it — to understand how their business is performing. In turn, this lack of insight limits their ability to make timely, informed decisions, ultimately inhibiting profitability and growth.

The Aspire platform replaces spreadsheets, manual processes, and unintegrated solutions with one centralized platform that provides full visibility into every aspect of business operations — each division, service, customer, service, job, ticket, account manager and/or crew. With the ability to query data in any way, business owners and managers can gain insight into what's impacting their bottom line so they can accurately factor overhead and direct costs into estimates to ensure proper margins.





The best business decision you'll ever make.

Gain complete control of your business with Aspire landscape management software.

When you're running a landscape company, it's important to have the right tools for the job. Aspire offers the end-to-end functionality you need to keep your entire business running smoothly—and profitably:

- » CRM
- » Estimating
- » Scheduling
- » Purchasing
- » Equipment
- » Invoicing
- » Reporting
- » Mobile Time
- » Accounting Integration

With access to information from every area of the company and real-time visibility into your margins, you'll be better equipped to make proactive, informed decisions that enable your business to grow and thrive.

Aspire. There's a reason it's the **#1** business management software for landscape contractors.



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PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$



Atlantic-OASE

Q+A with **Demi Fortuna**
Director of Product Information

How do your products save time?

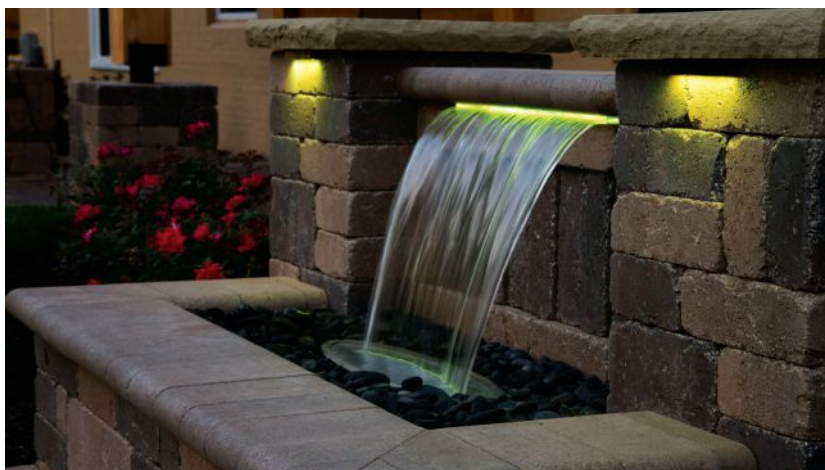
Atlantic-OASE products help contractors save time with a systems-based approach, where all components needed to make a waterfall or a fountain are matched to eliminate guesswork and guarantee results. For example, it's fast and easy to pair the spillway you want to install to the right basin and the right pump and plumbing, right out of the catalog, and there are numerous kits to choose from also.

How do your products save labor?

Having all the right components right at hand, with great instructions in three different languages, even videos for many projects, eliminates all the wasted labor that building custom systems usually requires.

How do your products save materials or fuel?

There's no running to the hardware store with Atlantic-OASE projects. Everything you will need is already included, which saves buying long lengths of PVC you might not need all of, additional fittings 'just in case' and time-and fuel-wasting "Oops, I forgot that" trips.



How do your products help generate additional revenue for landscape and lawn care companies?

Water features are the ultimate add-on to the bottom line! Pretty much everyone loves them, they are easy to install, especially into existing landscapes and hardscapes, and they require no additional skills besides those of any landscape or hardscape installer. Best of all, there are many levels of add-ons, from a simple single basalt column that can be completed by anyone in under an hour, to spillways that install in existing garden and hardscape walls in a half day — and the margins are much

higher than other projects! Adding lighting to the landscape or water features is even more profitable.

In what other ways do your products make landscape and lawn care companies profitable?

Atlantic-OASE projects not only add to the bottom line, they enhance the whole portfolio. People may only glance at a picture of even the most manicured lawn and hedges, but they will instantly be captivated by a tumbling waterfall, a bubbling stream or a spillway glistening in the light — especially in videos on social media. Water adds movement and sound to land- and hardscapes in a way no static landscape can, and that brings in customers.





Atlantic® | *Oase*®

Premier water feature products for every backyard



Visit us online to explore our full product lines

www.ATLANTIC-OASE.com



PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$

Bobcat Q+A

How do your products save time?

From the start, Bobcat has been all about accomplishing more in less time. Our company invented the first compact loader in a barn more than 60 years ago, helping a turkey farmer do more work in less time. From that compact and versatile concept, Bobcat helped to revolutionize the way people work on landscapes, construction sites and other demanding worksites.

How do your products save labor?

Landscapers often work in cramped work environments; Bobcat® mini track loaders and new small articulated loaders can travel and work where other machines can't. Their compact size allows them to fit through gates and narrow side yards or over established lawns with less risk of damage. This makes them an ideal replacement for hand tools, such as wheelbarrows and shovels.

How do your products save materials or fuel?

Fuel efficiency, smart use of materials and reduction of labor are fundamental benefits of using Bobcat equipment, from the small



size of our machines to the balance between machine weight, hydraulic pumps and engine horsepower.

Redesigned Bobcat engines in R-Series loaders, for example, have a new fuel system that helps to capture more usable fuel from every tankful. New Bobcat zero-turn mowers have high-capacity fuel tanks that help operators run longer without refilling. Precision grading systems such as laser-guided attachments, sonic/slope grading system and our 3D control system can pay for themselves over time with saved fill or concrete and labor.

How do your products help generate additional revenue for landscape and lawn care companies?

We make more attachments than any other compact equipment manufacturer, which means you'll find the right tools for hundreds of jobs. And when you're ready to grow your business, it's easy

to add an attachment to increase your capabilities.

Our new Bobcat mower lineup can cut through acres of tough terrain in less time, with cutting deck widths up to 72 inches and speeds of up to 13 miles per hour, depending on the model. Operators can fit more lawns into their limited schedule.

In what other ways do your products make landscape and lawn care companies profitable?

From the leading cargo capacity of our utility vehicles to the increased lifting capabilities of our new R-Series loaders and MT100 mini track loader, to the turf-friendly performance of our small articulated loaders, a Bobcat machine becomes the right tool for every job. That helps you maximize profit.





One Tough Animal.

From its outstanding quality to its incredible performance and comfort, the latest generation of Bobcat® equipment is our best yet. Ask your dealer about new R-Series loaders and R2-Series excavators.

Bobcat is a Doosan company. Doosan is a global leader in construction equipment, power and water solutions, engines, and engineering, proudly serving customers and communities for more than a century.

Bobcat®, the Bobcat logo and the colors of the Bobcat machine are registered trademarks of Bobcat Company in the United States and various other countries.

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PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$



Caterpillar



with **Greg Worley**

Senior Product Application Specialist

How do your products save time?

The Cat 306 CR saves time by helping to get more work completed more quickly. The incredible digging performance and impressive lift capacity (maxing out over 8,000 lbs) contribute to an overall boost in performance by up to 20% — which means more work done in less time. The industry-first Stick Steer feature allows operators to easily switch from traditional travel pedals with levers to joystick controls at the push of a button, making operation more efficient and productive.

How do your products save labor?

With the performance gains and versatility of the 306 CR, labor can be deployed to other work on the job site. In addition to doing more with less, serviceability is a standout feature of the 306 CR — so much so that you can save up to 10% on total ownership costs with longer service intervals, less downtime and lower workshop labor costs. All standard maintenance points on the 306 CR are easily accessed from ground level to get you up and running faster.



How do your products save materials or fuel?

The 306 CR and all Cat Next Generation Mini Excavators have industry-leading electronic hydraulic pumps and advanced HDH valves which provide maximum power and efficiency to save on fuel. The extended service intervals reduce material costs of fluids and filters.

How do your products help generate additional revenue for landscape and lawn care companies?

Furthering the versatility of the 306 CR, an ever-increasing range of attachments allows this machine to take on more diverse jobs than ever before. This machine can be equipped with thumbs, grapples, mowers, brushcutters, rippers,

hydraulic hammers and augers — just to name a few!

In what other ways do your products make landscape and lawn care companies profitable?

The more work you can do — efficiently — the more money your company makes. Not only will the 306 CR bring you gains in strength and operator control, but the versatility of what it can do on different jobs really expands the types of projects this machine can help your business tackle.



CAT[®] 306 CR



"This thing's a workout machine...takes one to know one."

- James "Jim Rat" Rodgers, Junior Lift Club

Visit CAT.COM/306CR-LIFTMORE for the video series.

THE CAT[®] 306 CR. RAISING THE BAR — AND READY TO LIFT MORE.

Word in the weight room? There's nothing mini about the 6-ton mini excavator, the Cat[®] 306 CR. People are buzzing about its lift capacity. Huge gains across the board and maxing over 8,000 pounds without a grunt. It's not just lifting weight either. With industry firsts like Stick Steer and Cruise Control, it lifts your control and comfort during operation. Combine all that in one machine — and you don't need a protein shake to see a boost in performance by up to 20%. Ready to see it pump iron in a real gym?

Visit CAT.COM/306CR-LIFTMORE for the video series, machine specs and how you can lift your work with the 306 CR.

PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$



ECHO



with **John Powers**

Director of Product Management

How do your products save time?

ECHO products are rooted in innovation; when designing our tools, we focus on durability, power and reliability. Our end user is top of mind when designing our products — our goal is to have pros work with tools that get the toughest jobs done quickly and efficiently.

How do your products save labor?

Our X Series models are ECHO's best-in-class products. They are designed with the following three principles in mind: powerful, lightweight, greater productivity. Powerful tools allow the end user to get their jobs done efficiently. Lightweight tools take stress off their bodies when using the equipment and that combination allows end users to get their work done quickly and comfortably. Our X Series models span across

the following categories: blowers, brushcutters, bed redefiners, chainsaws, edgers, hedge trimmers, power pruners, Pro Attachment Series and string trimmers.

How do your products help generate additional revenue for landscape and lawn care companies?

ECHO helps landscapers add incremental revenue in a couple ways. First, the performance generates time savings for crews. That in turn can allow for additional jobs to be done in the same amount of time for increased revenue. The old adage is alive and well that "time is money," and ECHO can help with providing a pro more time for more jobs. Secondly, ECHO continues to bring new product segments to market, which allows landscapers to expand their services. Perhaps a mow-and-blow landscaper starts offering house, deck and sidewalk cleaning with the help of ECHO's new lineup of pressure washers, or they leverage ECHO's recent expanded spreader lineup to add fertilization or snow melt services.



In what other ways do your products make landscape and lawn care companies profitable?

First is the performance, which equates to many factors: time savings, best-in-class quality and durable products for less downtime or trips to the service counter; best-in-class oil and fuel, also contributing to less downtime; better ergonomics for health and comfort, reducing the need for medical expenses; sales programs and fleet programs, offering substantial cost savings; and ECHO's unmatched warranty, which can reduce out-of-pocket expenses. This all works together in contributing to increased profitability for the professional landscaper.



**MORE POWER.
MORE PERFORMANCE.
MORE PRODUCTIVITY.**

YOU ASKED. WE DELIVERED.

**COMING
FALL 2020**



ECHO-USA.COM

PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$



Exmark Q+A with Lenny Mangnall Product Manager

How do your products save time?

For more than 25 years, Exmark Lazer Z zero-turn mowers have saved landscape professionals time with increased productivity, durability and uptime performance. We have reduced in-season maintenance significantly on Lazer Z models, with just four grease points requiring annual lubrication. Service intervals have also been extended, including a 500-hour hydro service interval when using Exmark Premium hydraulic oil.

How do your products save labor?

Our 96-inch Lazer Z models enable each worker to mow more properties in less time, so fewer workers are needed to finish jobs quickly and efficiently. Our customers report that one 96-inch Lazer Z can often replace up to three 60-inch mowers.

How do your products save materials or fuel?

Our Lazer Z X-Series models feature cutting edge Kohler Command Pro EFI engines with electronic governors, which

respond much more quickly than traditional mechanical governors. Exmark's patented RED Technology uses this heightened responsiveness to enable operation in a lower, more fuel-efficient RPM range, without compromising power or cut quality. The combination of EFI, the electronic governor and RED Technology can result in significant fuel savings for landscape contractors.

How do your products help generate additional revenue for landscape and lawn care companies?

The increased productivity Lazer Z mowers deliver enables landscape professionals to cut more grass, more quickly. As a result, they're able to complete more jobs each day. By increasing the productivity potential of each worker, landscape companies are able choose whether to reassign workers, add new revenue-generating services, or 'run lean' and do the same work with less labor.



In what other ways do your products make landscape and lawn care companies profitable?

Exmark has minimized in-season service needs and related downtime, so landscape pros can work more efficiently and spend less time in the shop maintaining their mowers. Additionally, our new Tractus airless drive tires maximize uptime performance and profitability by completely eliminating flat tires, with superior long-term durability as well.



PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$



Z Turf Equipment

Q+A with Jonathan Guarneri Product Manager

How do your products save time?

Z Turf Equipment products save time by enabling landscape professionals to do more than one job at a time. For example, our Z-Spray spreader-sprayers offer the ability to spread granular material while spraying, so just one pass is needed to perform both operations. Each of our machines features intuitive, easy-to-use controls, so less time is spent training new employees on how to operate them safely and efficiently.

How do your products save labor?

With the ability to simultaneously apply granular and liquid materials, Z-Spray spreader-sprayers maximize the productivity of each team member. The stand-on design of our Z-Spray and Z-Aerate models reduces operator fatigue, so it's easier for each employee to produce at a consistently high level throughout the day, every day.

How do your products save materials and/or fuel?

By performing two jobs at once, Z-Spray spreader-sprayers



accomplish more with fewer passes, so less fuel is used to achieve the desired results. Z-Spray machines are designed to apply materials more accurately, precisely where it's needed, with minimum waste. A digital speedometer is standard on the Max, Mid and Junior models. This enables operators to easily monitor and maintain a consistent speed to help ensure they don't over- or under-apply materials.

How do your products help generate additional revenue for landscape and lawn care companies?

Z-Spray spreader-sprayers enable lawn care professionals to perform two revenue-generating services with each pass of the machine. Crews finish jobs faster, which enables them to service more properties,

or perform additional services on properties with increased efficiency. The bottom line is increased revenue generating potential.

In what other ways do your products make landscape and lawn care companies profitable?

Z Turf Equipment machines are designed to be durable, easy to service and simple to maintain. Our focus on minimizing the amount of downtime the machines need for service and maintenance means they're ready and available to work a greater percentage of the time. Less downtime equals increased profit potential for our customers.



THE EXMARK LEGACY

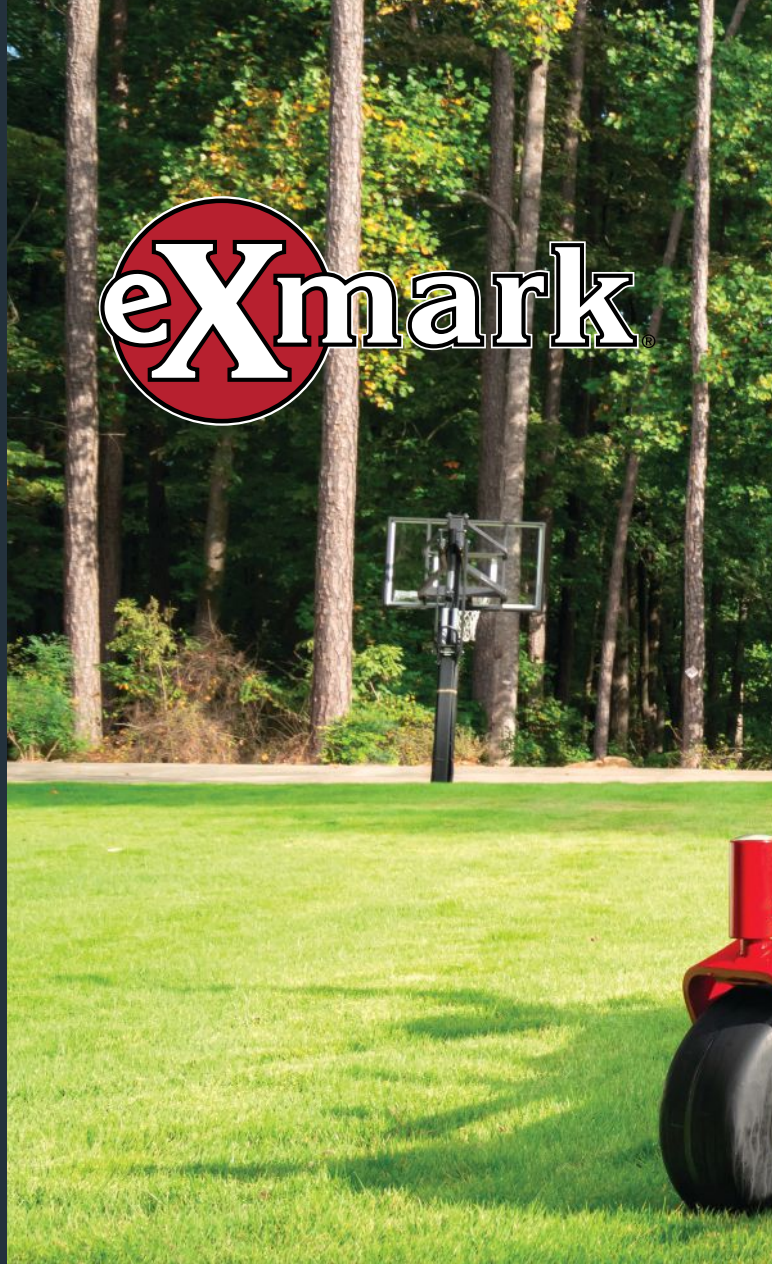
25 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE

Over the last 25 years, the Exmark Lazer Z® may have changed in looks, but has maintained the same standard of excellence with its notable cut quality, productivity, durability and up-time performance. Professional cutters and homeowners alike have aspired to be a part of the legacy and experience the Lazer Z's superior cut quality, productivity, durability and performance. Built for easier maintenance and longer life, a Lazer Z is simply tougher and easier to operate. And since one size doesn't fit all when it comes to professional zero-turn mowers, Exmark offers a complete line of Lazer Z mowers to fit anyone's specific needs.



NEW select gas-powered Lazer Z models can be outfitted with Tractus drive tires. These all-new airless tires are an Exmark exclusive designed to eliminate flat tire downtime, increase traction, enhance ride quality and boost durability for added tire life.

Learn more at [Exmark.com](https://www.Exmark.com)



TURF EQUIPMENT™





ADDING TO THE LEGACY

New to the Exmark family of products, Z Turf Equipment brand has significantly expanded its product line, with a number of new models based on legacy Exmark designs. First, well-known for its rich history in lawn care industry, is the Z-Spray spreader-sprayers. The complete line-up includes: the Z-Spray LTS, Z-Spray Junior, Z-Spray Mid and Z-Spray Max stand-on models. Next, the Z-Aerate line will expand in 2021 from one model to three, including stand-on aerators in 40-, 30- and 24-inch widths. Other new 2021 Z Turf Equipment includes the versatile 20-inch Z-Seed slicer seeder, which performs three jobs with each pass: verticutting, dethatching and overseeding. Z Turf Equipment has also added more than 700 North American dealers, making it easier than ever for customers to get the parts and service support they need to keep their machines running at peak productivity.

Learn more at ZTurfEquipment.com



PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$



FX Luminaire

Q+A with **Sarah Auyeung**
Associate Product Manager

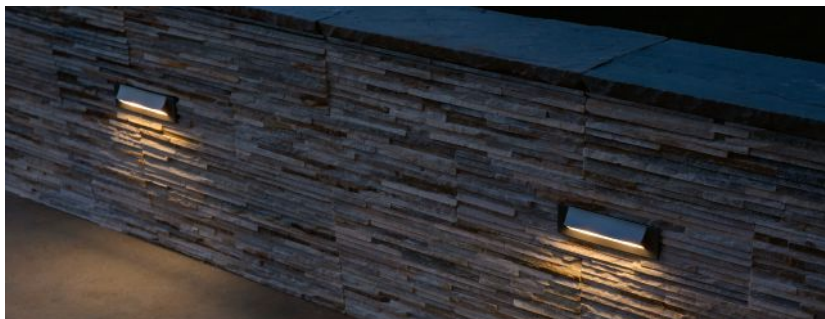
What are the key features and benefits of the HS wall light?

The new HS wall light from the FX Luminaire Designer Series offers a practical and innovative solution for modern recessed lighting applications. Built with die-cast aluminum, two-layer anodization, and a protective powder-coat finish, the HS offers sleek lines and tamper-resistant hardware for seamless installation in a range of settings.

With a height of just 2.3" (58 mm), the compact fixture installs easily on the shorter steps of contemporary hardscapes. The HS offers effective outward illumination with an even light distribution, making it a versatile alternative to traditional path lights.

This fixture was designed for easy installation. The construction sleeve serves as a built-in junction box for wire connections and includes modular L-shaped brackets with helpful guidelines to accommodate multiple wall-mounting thicknesses.

When used with next-generation Luxor® lighting control technology, the minimalist HS provides limitless zoning, dimming and color capabilities to transform any outdoor living space.



Is there a specific problem that the HS wall light is designed to solve?

As architectural design embraces modern aesthetics, landscapes are reflecting the same clean lines and geometric shapes. One design shift has been the wider-tread, shorter risers on hardscape steps. Contemporary steps now require step lights to be less than 3" (76 mm) tall.

With that specification in mind, the low-profile HS strategically directs light forward and outward. This effect lets the fixture serve as an area light when installed in low retaining walls, and makes it an ideal solution for illuminating walkways, driveways and patios.

How does lighting help generate additional revenue for landscape companies?

In any landscape design, the two most important considerations are the amount of usable space

and the time your clients have to enjoy it. Outdoor lighting is an easy value-add that can increase revenue without much more labor cost. For example, wire can be tucked into existing irrigation trenches. When lighting is planned in advance and properly accommodated into the hardscape construction process, you save time and effort while adding thousands of dollars to your bottom line.

Like all FX Luminaire fixtures, the HS wall light is simple to install, backed by LED technology of the highest quality, and designed with advanced engineering for maximum longevity and performance in the field. Learn how FX Luminaire lighting fixtures can help bring your next hardscape project to life at fxl.com.

FXLuminaire

Small in Size, **BIG IN ATTITUDE**

Introducing the HS Wall Light



With a height just over 2 inches, the new HS wall light offers an even light distribution in an ultra-slim design for recessed applications. The fixture's precisely targeted outward light distribution makes it an ideal solution for illuminating stairways, walkways, driveways, lawns, and patios.



Choose from nine powder-coat options to complement any stone, tile, or wall finish.

Height: 2.3" | Width: 8" | Depth: 0.9"



Low profile



Modern design



Easy to install

PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$



Go iLawn Q+A with Mike Rorie CEO

How do your products save time?

Go iLawn InstantEstimator saves landscape, lawn care and snow removal contractors time by allowing them to simultaneously measure and estimate a job, in real-time.

Typical measuring and estimating can require several trips to the job. And depending on the property and job scope, can take several days, or longer to complete.

Go iLawn InstantEstimator is an online automated system that uses technology that integrates multiple time-consuming steps into one action. It can shorten your turnaround time from a few days to a few hours or even minutes.

Plus, Go iLawn InstantEstimator retains all of your measurements and estimates for every project. You can easily access this "Property Intelligence" database to adjust your estimates at any time in the future.

How do your products save labor, materials or fuel?

Go iLawn lets you measure and evaluate properties from anywhere. You save fuel and vehicle wear and tear by reducing the number of trips your team must take to

the property before the work is even sold. And it lets you accurately estimate the time and materials needed for each job, to eliminate waste and keep your job costs in line.

How do your products help generate additional revenue for landscape and lawn care companies?

The Go iLawn InstantEstimator system provides efficiencies and clarity in your business that frees up your time and helps you discover new opportunities to innovate and grow revenue. For example, the "see all parcels" tool helps you quickly find and measure all the properties adjacent to a project. You can use it to implement a cluster marketing strategy to increase your customer density and increase your profit margins.

In what other ways do your products make landscape and lawn care companies profitable?

Using Go iLawn InstantEstimator helps contractors create significant competitive advantages in



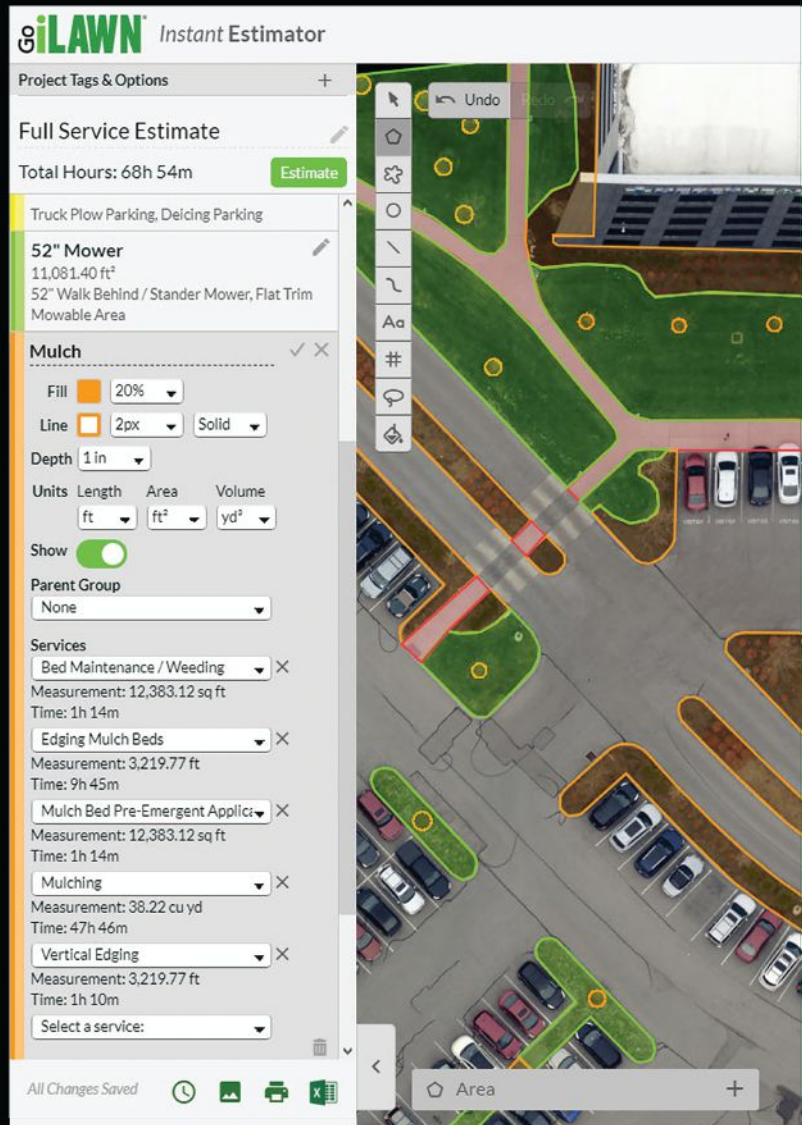
their market. You enjoy a speed advantage because you can bid more jobs in less time. Prospects will be amazed by how quickly you turn around their bid requests and it immediately differentiates you from the competition.

You also gain competitive sales advantages. Go iLawn lets you sell visually to prospects and customers in person or in virtual meetings. Just pull up their property in Go iLawn on your laptop or mobile device to present the job. Potential customers quickly see and understand the higher value of your work and are impressed by your technology and sales experience. It gives you a major competitive advantage to win the sale.

Go iLAWN InstantEstimator™

Meet Your New

Time Machine



Introducing

GoLAWN[®] InstantEstimator[™]

Just login and enter an address. You're immediately transported to the property via multi-angle, high resolution aerial and satellite imagery. Click a tool to start precision measuring the property and you'll see an accurate estimate of time and materials appear instantly - in real time.

And in today's world, the **InstantEstimator[™]** system makes remote work more productive and profitable. Easily do "no contact" business with virtual property walkthroughs and dynamic online sales presentations. Now you and your customer can literally "meet on the property" without physically being there.

Discover all the ways **InstantEstimator[™]** technology can help your company increase profits, reduce expenses, save time and gain a competitive advantage in any market condition.

Get Your Free 14-Day Trial at GoiLawn.com

PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$



Graham Spray Equipment

Q+A with **Dave Arnett**
Sales Manager



The GSE Maverick

How does your product save time?

Saving time starts with high-quality components. All our spray units and rigs are built using only a few select components that have proven themselves to be both the best in dependability and easy to use and maintain, reducing the time lawn care providers spend keeping their equipment in working order.

Once we understand the customer's business and needs, we're able to recommend the equipment and customizations that maximize efficiency. For one company, it might be a larger rig with a dual pumping station, allowing them to service an entire route in one trip. For another, it could be a smaller rig equipped with drop tanks or a larger split tank. Whatever the final product, it's always designed for maximal efficiency.

How does your product save labor?

If you look at the layout of any Graham rig, you'll notice that tanks, pumps, hose reels — the equipment that's used all day long — are easily accessible. One of our newest rigs, the Maverick, is a great example. We launched this as an improvement over the traditional pickup truck equipped with a spray unit. The open layout of the Maverick was designed to allow easy access to the spray equipment. Plus it has better storage capacity, reducing the labor involved in loading/offloading equipment and chemicals. These two concepts are common to all our rigs.

How does your product save materials or fuel?

The high-quality components we use reduce material loss due to leaks in tanks and spray hoses. Designing rigs for optimal efficiency in servicing routes reduces the number of miles driven.

How does your product help generate additional revenue?

We try to cover all the bases here. The Maverick, for example, not only reduces labor and increases

capacity but also costs less than a pickup truck plus spray unit, yielding a faster return on investment.

Another one of our latest rigs, the LawnScaper, really changes the game for companies that want to provide both landscaping and lawn care. This one rig accommodates equipment for both services, opening up two revenue streams for them. Then there's our Enclosed Unit and box trucks, which provide ample advertising space for our customers. We like to think of them as mobile billboards that help our customers get new accounts.

In what other ways does your product make companies profitable?

The short answer is very little downtime and long lifespan. Graham spray units and rigs have a well-earned reputation for being among the most dependable and longest-lasting on the market. And we wouldn't have it any other way. A guy's rig is his livelihood — how he provides for himself and his family. It's a point of pride for us to offer equipment he knows he can trust.



What's better than a pickup truck + spray unit?

OUR MAVERICK RIGS.

MAVERICK 1

Costs less than a pickup and spray unit, making it the better choice for new and growing lawn care businesses.



Superior handling, greater cargo capacity, easier access to equipment – and more – at a very nice price.

MAVERICK 2

Dual pumping stations and a ramped carrier for a ride-on mower or sprayer mean more versatility and safety for lawn care pros and landscapers.



PUTTING YOU FIRST IS WHY
WE'RE SECOND TO NONE

Visit us at
Deep South Turf Expo.

(770) 942-1617

GrahamSE.com

© 2020 Graham Spray Equipment

PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$



The Grounds Guys

Q+A with Ben & Stephanie Schoot

Franchise Owners | The Grounds Guys of Myrtle Beach (S.C.)

ACCOLADES: FRANCHISE OWNER OF THE YEAR,
TOP GUN FRANCHISE OWNER

What was business like before you joined The Grounds Guys franchise? How has it changed?

We had our landscape company for seven years before we reached out to The Grounds Guys. We were doing okay, we had a small crew with two trucks, but there was no structure, no financial management. I was on a mower by 7:30 every day, coming home dirty and missing events with my family. Often, I wouldn't take any salary from the business, we would just take a draw when we had a bill to pay. It came to a point where we had to decide to either continue with our business and look for a franchise, or face the alternative; get out of business and get another job.

I wanted a business, not a job.

That's when we started looking at The Grounds Guys. Now, we are both able to pay ourselves a salary for the work we do in the business, and I work in the office and am home by dinner every day. **I now have the quality of life and time flexibility aspect that I wanted from business ownership in the first place.**

Why did you convert your business to The Grounds Guys?

We got that question a lot, until we started growing like crazy. No one asks us that anymore. What made the decision for us was when we traveled to the Waco Home Office and met the team and learned the system. Before we made it back home, we were all in. It was a big risk, but **we were ready to take advantage of the systems to the fullest.**



the Grounds Guys
a neighborly company

What have you found to be the most beneficial about being a Grounds Guys franchise owner?

Networking with the other owners has been the most incredible part since joining The Grounds Guys. **Our fellow owners completely understand everything we are going through. Everyone is willing to talk with you and help you make your business better.** What other business can you think of where you can call someone that has the exact model and goals as you and ask questions that will help to better your operation.

Any advice to existing landscape business owners?

To independent owners I would say, what are you missing? What do you need in your business? What hats should you take off to help you meet your goals? **Franchising isn't for everyone, but if you struggle with systems or accountability or finance management or goal setting, it might be a solution that you look into.** You still have to go out and do the work. You still have to build the relationships and get it done.



Grow more. **Work smarter.** We can help.

You've built your business in the landscaping industry with hard work, dedication, and more than a few grass stains. You have a customer base in your community, but you may lack the time, resources, and systems to take on more growth. What if there was a better way to grow without losing the equity you've worked so hard to earn?

Get the tools to build a better landscaping business.

When you become a franchise owner of The Grounds Guys®, you remain an independent business owner, but benefit from the established systems and support of an international home service brand. Combine your industry experience with our established systems to grow the landscaping business you've always dreamed of.

- ✓ Proven Operational Systems
- ✓ Specialized Software
- ✓ Business Coaching & Support
- ✓ Powerful Marketing
- ✓ Vendor Buying Power
- ✓ Extensive & Ongoing Training

Contact us to learn how franchising with The Grounds Guys can give you the freedom to work **on** your business, not **in** your business.

GO.NBLY.COM/LM | franchise.groundsguys@nbly.com | 866.470.9538

This advertisement does not constitute an offer of a franchise. A franchise offering can be made by us only in a state if we are first registered, excluded, exempted or otherwise qualified to offer franchises in that state, and only if we provide you with an appropriate franchise disclosure document. Franchises may not be available in all states. The filing of an application for registration of an offering prospectus or the acceptance and filing thereof by the NY Department of Law as required by NY law does not constitute approval of the offering or the sale of such franchise by the NY Department of Law or the Attorney General of NY. MN Reg. File No. 2356. © 2020 Neighborly All rights reserved. 1010-1020 North University Parks Drive, Waco, Texas 76707

PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$



Hunter



with **Anthony Long**

*Product Manager, Hydrawise
Irrigation Control*

How do your products save time?

To start, the Hydrawise interface looks the same whether you're in the office or on your smartphone — it even looks the same to your customers! Identical pictures, zone names and operational functions provide consistency throughout the software, and consistency ensures familiarity and ease of use. Hydrawise also allows you to get a lot of work done at the office. You can program irrigation schedules before installation, monitor controllers and make changes for customers right from your desk. This means your field team can focus on getting fieldwork done, and simple tasks can be completed efficiently in the office.

How do your products save labor?

It's not so much about saving labor, it's about making sure the right people are using the right resources to get the job done. The hardest people to find are good field technicians. Why have them stop work to make a simple change on a controller? Or even worse, have them drive to a customer's house to change the controller program, when this could easily be done by someone in the office? With

Hydrawise, field technicians can continue focusing on what they do best and leave controller updates to others on the team.

How do your products save materials or fuel?

When it comes to travel, the more that vehicle use is minimized, the more you can save in fuel, operational costs, and capital cost for replacement vehicles. A study carried out by a Hydrawise contractor found that vehicle mileage is reduced by 30% if all customers use Hydrawise controllers. Do as much as you can remotely and only go on-site when you must. Customers prefer this approach as well, especially in the new COVID-19 world.

How do your products help generate additional revenue for landscape companies?

To generate more revenue, you must do more. With Hydrawise, doing more is easy! It starts with the initial sale of the controller, and upgrading the irrigation system by adding a flow meter. Then, you can continually



monitor the system, identify potential problems, inform your customers and most importantly, exceed their expectations. Show them the value of Hydrawise with monthly water-use reporting. Hydrawise changes your business. Your staff can work more efficiently, and your customers will be more appreciative.

In what other ways do your products make landscape companies profitable?

Hydrawise saves water, saves labor, saves resources, and most importantly leads to happier customers who value you and the services that you provide. Profitability is improved because Hydrawise ensures that customers have great experiences. They want you to continue providing them with valuable services that in turn boost your income. This can only occur if you have the right business tools. Hydrawise is a fantastic revenue generation tool designed especially for contractors.

Hunter®

THE **INDUSTRY STANDARD** JUST RAISED THE BAR. AGAIN.



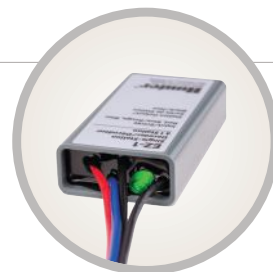
Get 23 conventional stations with the PCM-1600 module



Or enable two-wire for up to 32 stations with the PC-DM module

GET MORE OUT OF YOUR PRO-C® CONTROLLER

New plug-in modules increase conventional Pro-C station counts and enable two-wire or hybrid conventional/two-wire control with the revolutionary Hunter EZ Decoder System. The freedom and flexibility of more stations in more configurations keeps the trusted Pro-C an affordable and reliable solution for residential and light commercial projects. *That's the power of innovation.*



EZ-1 Decoder

PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$

Isuzu Commercial Truck of America

Q+A

Today's landscape companies are searching for ways to save time and money. Like a lot of businesses, they're looking for ways to be more efficient while increasing profits and maintaining a high level of customer satisfaction. Whether they are mowing, cleaning up debris or spraying fertilizers, professional services have to be delivered to their customers' doorsteps in a professional package. The truck is the first thing customers notice upon arrival, and is one of the many reasons Isuzu trucks are so popular. However, there are also a number of ways that an Isuzu truck saves time, maximizes labor and generates additional revenue.

How does an Isuzu truck save time?

Ask anyone who has driven an Isuzu truck with its low cab forward design and the first thing they will

talk about is its great maneuverability and visibility. The turning radius and visibility is the best in its class. Whether you're parking or making a tight turn, those time-consuming, three-point turns are less frequent. The maneuverability and visibility not only saves time but also lessens the chance of bumping into unforeseen objects.

How does an Isuzu truck maximize labor?

First, our quality is among the best in the industry. Isuzu trucks are known for maximizing the uptime of our drivers; keeping them on the job and out of the repair shop. One breakdown can cost a business a minimum of two to three hours of a crew's time and missed appointments. Secondly, our trucks are more capable than traditional trucks. Whether you are hauling equipment or trees to the job site, our payload and body designs maximize the truck's capability. This keeps your crew from making multiple trips and pulling trailers that are an added expense.



How does an Isuzu truck generate revenue and add to profitability?

A professional appearance enhances your brand and loyalty among your customers while attracting new ones. Isuzu trucks are known for their professional appearance and with a customized body, show they are built strictly for use by professionals. Isuzu trucks are also well known for their low cost of ownership and residual value. Great fuel efficiency, superb quality, a robust warranty, a preventive service maintenance plan and special financing keep operating expenses low and fixed. Knowing your monthly costs allows you to plan accordingly and save over the long term.



TIME IS RUNNING OUT TO CHOOSE ONE OF THESE TWO PROGRAMS

1



**DEFERRED PAYMENTS AND NO INTEREST ON
ALL NEW FTR & N-SERIES DIESEL TRUCKS FOR 90 DAYS**

2

**APR RATES AS LOW AS
0.00%
ON ALL NEW N-SERIES
DIESEL TRUCKS**



Programs Expire December 31, 2020

**ISUZU
TRUCK**

Vehicles shown with optional equipment; some equipment is dealer installed. Offers are only available through Isuzu Finance of America, Inc. (IFAI). For Program 1: No interest or monthly payments to IFAI for 90 days from date of sale. First 90 days of interest to be paid by Isuzu Commercial Truck of America, Inc. Deferred first three monthly principal amounts paid over remaining term. For Programs 1 & 2: Finance terms are limited, credit approval required. Participating dealers only. Please see your authorized Isuzu dealer for details. © 2020 ISUZU COMMERCIAL TRUCK OF AMERICA, INC.

**ISUZU
FINANCE**

PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$



Lawnbot

Q+A with **Kendall Hines**
CEO/Co-founder

Lawnbot is an e-commerce platform that allows home service businesses to easily sell their services through their website, Facebook, Instagram and HomeAdvisor. Home service companies can sell their services online through their website using Lawnbot to bring their business and services online in the modern economy.

How does your product save labor?

Lawnbot is your 24/7 digital salesperson. This means \$0 cost per sale! No commission, workers' compensation or health benefits. Just sales made via your website 24/7.

How does your product save materials or fuel?

With Lawnbot, homeowners can order online from companies' websites. This means no more pointless slogs out to a prospect's home. Homeowners can now buy on their time 24/7.

How does your product help generate additional revenue for landscape and lawn care companies?

We allow them to sell their services online using our beautiful software. Now, your company has the power of Amazon on your own website and has instant speed to the lead to make sales instantly.

In what other ways does your product make landscape and lawn care companies profitable?

It really allows them to optimize their sales funnel. Salespeople should never be order takers,

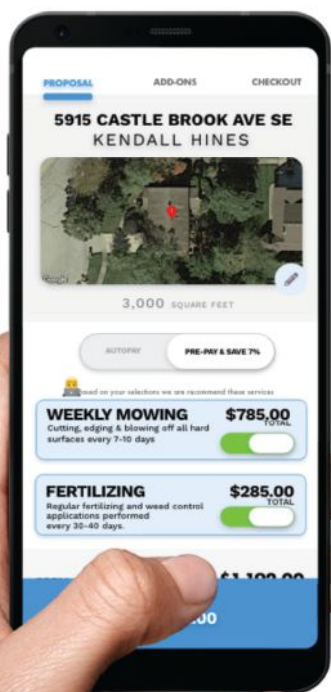


especially if you are paying them a commission. You already paid money to generate the lead; realize the full value of that lead instantly by allowing online ordering via Lawnbot on your website!





Add Online Ordering To Your Business!



**ACCURATE
MEASUREMENTS**



INSTANT QUOTES



PAY INSTANTLY

8145 sq ft

measur.it



Integrated Partner



lawnbot.biz

**616-450-2395 Call/Text
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**Our Software
Your Brand
Online Sales**



PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$



Mid-Atlantic Nursery Trade Show

Q+A with **Vanessa A. Finney**
Executive Vice President

The pandemic has canceled a large number of industry shows. What drove your decision to move forward with reimagined plans for MANTS 2021?

MANTS has meant business to the green industry for 51 years, and we plan to continue that tradition in 2021 despite these changing and challenging times. We know there is no perfect substitution for an in-person show, and doing nothing for our exhibitors and attendees was just not an option we were willing to accept. We remain steadfast in our commitment to connecting exhibitors with buying companies to facilitate continued commerce in the green industry.

MANTS is known for being the place for business and unparalleled networking. What's in store for participants in 2021 in place of the in-person show?

We invite our exhibitors and buyers to join us Jan. 6-8, 2021, to engage in commerce and conversation via the

new MANTS.com Business Hub. The Business Hub offers exhibitors and buying companies an opportunity to network, explore and discuss new products and, most importantly, do business. It provides a searchable directory of exhibitor profiles that highlight the products, services and equipment to help buyers gear up for the busy seasons ahead.

The hub utilizes intelligent matching to connect exhibitors and buyers based on selected categories of interest. Participants can then easily engage in real time in the ways that work best for them from the convenience of their office, on-site work location or home. Exhibitor profiles will feature product images, videos and company news and information to help inform and educate buyers while also providing opportunities to participate in one-on-one meetings, group sales presentations,

live product demonstrations and hosted drop-in hours.

How diverse are the products shown on MANTS.com?

MANTS is one of the largest private trade shows serving the horticulture industry and the premier green industry marketplace for finding plants and nursery stock, landscape and garden items, heavy and light duty equipment, tools, furniture and hundreds of other allied industry products. At MANTS.com, you can **SEARCH, SHOP, LEARN, CONNECT and BUY.**

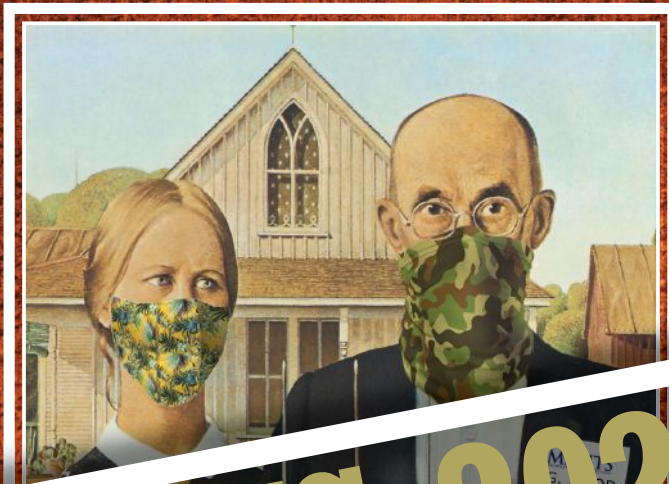
How can companies participate in MANTS 2021?

Attendee registration opens in mid-October and runs through Jan. 8. The cost is \$10 per person, and all registered attendees will have access to the Business Hub Jan. 6-8, 2021, leading up to the show and for 90 days post-show. Anyone interested in attending can visit MANTS.com for more information.



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MANTS 2021 TAKES A NEW DIRECTION

MANTS.com opens for your business on
JANUARY 6, 2021
Registration begins mid-October.

For 51 years MANTS has meant BUSINESS
In January 2021 this doesn't change.
We cannot meet in person but business still takes
center stage.

Your business has inventory to replenish, equipment
to upgrade, and shelves to restock.
MANTS has the exhibitors with all the products and
services your company needs.

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Visit mants.com often for details and updates to see how you can continue to utilize
MANTS to meet all of your company's inventory needs.

PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$



Mulch Mate

Q+A with Nick Carlson CEO

How do your products save time?

Mulch Mate can unload mulch, stone, sand or topsoil directly into a wheelbarrow, container or loader bucket in three seconds with the press of a joystick. To hand shovel 10 yards of mulch from your truck can take two people 45 minutes. Using the Mulch Mate, this job can be done in 10 minutes or less without putting two guys in the truck. This can save you 50 percent to 80 percent or more, getting the entire crew finished and on to the next job faster. Since Mulch Mate is all electric and self-contained, your crew can pull up to the job and be laying mulch in literally seconds. Mulch Mate is ultraquiet, allowing your crew to start early and finish later in the day without disturbing the neighbors in the community.

How do your products save labor?

With Mulch Mate, you no longer have two guys standing around in the truck shoveling. You can do the same job with fewer people or put those guys on the ground, getting the job done even faster. You now need less people to do the same job. Material is dispensed directly into the wheelbarrow with a lot less mess,

saving you valuable cleanup time.

How do your products save materials or fuel?

Mulch Mate can save in both manners. Since the twin augers fluff and aerate the mulch, you will actually get 20 percent better coverage out of your material. Ten yards of mulch will spread like 12 yards, directly saving you money on each job. Mulch Mate is all electric, so there is no gas, no oil and very low maintenance. Mulch Mate runs on two self-contained, 12-volt batteries that can be recharged right from your truck while driving.

How do your products help generate additional revenue for landscapers and lawn care companies?

Mulch Mate helps save money by allowing you to reduce labor costs and by giving you better coverage by using less material on the job. The biggest way Mulch Mate helps generate additional revenue



is by allowing your company to finish your contract mulching jobs weeks sooner. This will give you multiple weeks more time to do more profitable jobs sooner in the season. Companies that use Mulch Mate on stone and dirt jobs see huge time savings as well. Shoveling stone is a miserable job, but with Mulch Mate, you simply press the joystick and fill your wheelbarrow in seconds.

In what other ways do your products make landscape and lawn care companies profitable?

Our customers tell us that they have been able to retain their quality employees as well as hire better employees because they have made the job of moving mulch much easier with fewer injuries. You no longer have people jumping in and out of the truck all day. Since most injuries come from jumping out of trucks, Mulch Mate could help save on workers' comp claims as well.



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LABOR SAVER



MULCH MATE®

«KART MATE®

Save labor using equipment you already own.

A Mulch Mate® on your current truck can speed up mulch, stone and compost deliveries by 200%. Move material 3x times faster with a Kart Mate® attached to your mower



PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$



Natural Alternative

Q+A with **Victoria Mack**
Customer Support Specialist

Why Natural Alternative Ice Melt?

Looking for an environmentally friendly product that's safer for pets and not harmful to hardscapes and vegetation? Natural Alternative Ice Melt proudly offers it all! Natural Alternative was developed through its sister company, NaturaLawn of America — the leader in organic-based lawn care, that's focused on raising the bar for safety standards.

How is Natural Alternative Ice Melt different from other ice melt products?

Other ice melts can be very damaging to soil, vegetation and waterways. Traditional ice melts can heat up to 175 degrees F due to the high concentrations of salt, which can cause severe burns to pets and lawns. Natural Alternative Ice Melt doesn't contain high concentrations of salt, won't get slippery when wet and doesn't leave white residue on floors. Natural Alternative Ice Melt is effective but gentle on concrete and other hardscapes and is biodegradable and nontoxic to fish and pets. Natural Alternative is the safer choice when considering the environment.

How does Natural Alternative Ice Melt save companies time and money?

Apply Natural Alternative Ice Melt prior to an ice or snow storm — as soon as it comes in contact with moisture, it creates a brine! The brine resists refreezing, preventing ice sheets from forming under the snow. This brine also lowers the freezing point of the ground, saving you time from needing to reapply more ice melt. Natural Alternative is a powerful blend designed to cover more surface area and provide maximum performance results. Our ice melt requires two-thirds less product compared to rock salt. Yes, one of our bags is equivalent to three bags of rock salt.

How does Natural Alternative Ice Melt help generate additional revenue for landscape and lawn care companies?

Using Natural Alternative Ice Melt means more storage space and happy crew members. By using less product with faster melting power, there will be fewer bags to haul and safer driveways and sidewalks. It's time for fewer repairs to lawns and



hardscapes — Natural Alternative Ice Melt is the safer alternative.

When your customers use Natural Alternative Ice Melt, you're helping to protect the work you've completed and the environment. With the demand for products like our safer ice melt, you will generate revenue during the off-season while saving on repair costs come spring. A winter-long increase in revenue that provides your customers with a safer winter sounds like a win to us!



SNOW PROS

Depend on Natural Alternative®
for Ice Melt & LEED Compliancy

— Two Professional, Pet-Friendly Products —

Ice Melt

- Melts Ice Fast
- Works to -16° F
- Resists Thawing & Re-Freezing
- Non-Toxic & Biodegradable



100% CMA

- LEED Compliant
- Chloride-Free
- Less Corrosive Than Tap Water
- No Pitting or Spalling



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enhance your
business?



Serving over
110k customers



\$80M+ in
gross revenues



Serving 26
states + D.C.



2 additional
revenue sources



Environmentally
& pet-friendly



6 year avg.
customer life

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Average Gross Revenue
per Franchise Owner:
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Revenue Potential:
Up to \$150,000



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PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$



Nufarm

Q+A with Aaron Hathaway

Technical Services Manager



How does your product save time?

A mixture of Cheetah Pro + SureGuard SC can be applied as directed sprays around desirable plants in landscape beds and can be broadcast-applied in areas where bare ground is desired. This combination saves time for applicators looking to control weeds that are already present and control weeds that are waiting in the soil as seed. One application provides control now and can provide months of control later.

How does your product save labor?

Cheetah Pro + SureGuard SC provides synergistic control, which means the combination works better than the addition of each one applied on its own. Cheetah Pro is a nonselective, postemergent herbicide controlling grasses, broadleaves and sedges, and SureGuard SC, although its main function is residual weed control, also helps out with control of weeds that are present at application. These herbicides

team up with two different modes of action to knock out weeds that have already emerged, and SureGuard SC remains as a barrier in the soil to guard against later intruders. This increase in efficacy improves customer satisfaction and prevents callbacks.

How does your product save materials or fuel?

One application of Cheetah Pro + SureGuard SC can provide knockdown and residual control of weeds for more than four months. Return trips to control reemerged and/or newly germinated weeds in bare ground areas and landscape beds not only increases costs for materials but also fuel and labor. It is a great advantage to allow herbicides with residual to do so much of the work for you even after you leave the site.

How do your products help generate additional revenue for landscape and lawn care companies?

Having a plan of attack for weed control versus reacting to weed encroachment is paramount. A great program for weed control in landscape beds/bare ground

areas is a spring-timed and a fall-timed application of Cheetah Pro + SureGuard SC — these timings address summer and winter annual weeds that show up like clockwork with post and pre control. Applying this combination at the shoulders of the season can provide season-long control of weeds and free up time to cover other sites and/or sell more services.

In what other ways do your products make landscape and lawn care companies profitable?

Cheetah Pro + SureGuard SC provides fast control of weeds — injury is prominent within two or three days and burned down soon after. As expectations from customers increase, fast control that doesn't leave customers staring at weeds for weeks can reduce callbacks and increase their level of satisfaction. We at Nufarm understand that expectations continue to increase and have worked hard to provide solutions that go the extra mile.



FASTER, LONGER WEED CONTROL

CHEETAH® PRO KNOCKS WEEDS DOWN. SUREGUARD® SC KEEPS WEEDS DOWN.

Cheetah® Pro
NON-SELECTIVE HERBICIDE



SureGuard® SC
HERBICIDE

Save time, money and labor with Cheetah® Pro and SureGuard® SC. This non-selective and residual tank mix delivers 4+ months of weed takedown to keep customers happy.

LEARN MORE // [NUFARM.COM/USTURF](https://www.nufarm.com/usturf)

MORE PRODUCTS EXCLUSIVELY FROM NUFARM

Celero
HERBICIDE

Q-Ball®
HERBICIDE

SurePower®

 **Nufarm**

Grow a better tomorrow

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PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$



Quali-Pro

Q+A with **Nicholas Strain**
Business Director

How do your products or services save landscape or lawn care pros time?

The Quali-Pro portfolio makes it simple for lawn and landscape professionals. Our platform for innovation is branded “combination chemistry,” which is intended to save you time and take the guesswork out of mixing chemistry and loading sprayers.

How do your products or services save landscape or lawn care pros labor?

Quali-Pro solutions save labor by reducing the chance of errors. Our labels are simple, and, in a lot of cases, our products contain multiple active ingredients allowing them to control a broad spectrum of weeds, diseases or insects.

How do your products or services save landscape or lawn care materials or fuel?

Superior efficacy. Quali-Pro products are tested and proven to perform each and every time. Lawn and landscape professionals will save on materials and fuel when their product performance-related customer callbacks are eliminated.

How do your products or services help generate additional revenue for landscape and lawn care companies?

When you are using products that work, you trust them. When your customers see the results, they trust you. When your customer trusts you with their lawn or landscape, they will also trust you to solve other problems on their property. Cross-selling is grounded in trust, and with Quali-Pro products, you are set up for success.

In what other ways do your products or services make landscape and lawn care companies profitable?

Quali-Pro offers excellent products to control pest (including insects, weeds and unwanted disease), along with offering a competitive price. Quali-Pro products will lower your overhead by offering a more competitive price on your basic



chemical needs. Along with offering your basic chemical needs, Quali-Pro is developing innovative chemical combinations (Negate and 2DQ). We are continuously working to develop new solutions that save you time, money and increase your bottom line. Come check out our portfolio today!

QUALI-PRO

NEW
PRODUCT



**Control
Solutions Inc.**
A member of the ADAMA Group



DOXEM[®] IG

Granular Insecticide Bait

**Control
Cockroaches,
Mole Crickets,
& other Pests**

Controls Nymphs & Adults

Starts working in 48-72 hours

Weather resistant for up to 14 days

Ready to use bait with no PPE requirements



INSECTICIDE

CSI-PEST.COM

PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$



Rain Bird

Q+A with **Amar Thiraviam**
Senior Product Manager

How do your products save time and labor?

Our ESP-LXIVM Series 2-Wire Controllers are designed for use with two-wire irrigation systems of all sizes. Unlike other two-wire controllers, the LXIVM features the IVM-SOL, a field device that eliminates the need for a decoder. As a result, contractors have to make just half the usual number of splices required during installation of a two-wire system, saving time and labor during installation and maintenance. Additionally, the LXIVM's Smart Valve™ technology enables two-way communication between the controller and valve, enabling pinpoint diagnostics and rapid issue resolution.

During operation, end users will save time thanks to the LXIVM's intuitive and simple user interface. Not only does the LXIVM have far fewer dial positions, but the controller's large screen and additional improvements, like its back button and language button, also make navigating through complex irrigation programming options much faster.

How do your products save materials or fuel?

A 200-zone, two-wire irrigation system would typically require 800 wire splices. With the LXIVM, that same system only requires 400 wire splices, saving materials costs. LXIVM systems can also support up to 240 stations, 10 master valves, 10 flow sensors and eight weather sensors. Such a large-capacity system can replace multiple decoder-based systems, further saving material costs.

The controller constantly monitors for low flow and excess flow conditions to use less water. Additionally, LXIVM works closely with its central control platform to automatically adjust watering times based on local weather conditions. Latching technology uses digital pulses to activate valves, reducing the amount of energy the system consumes.



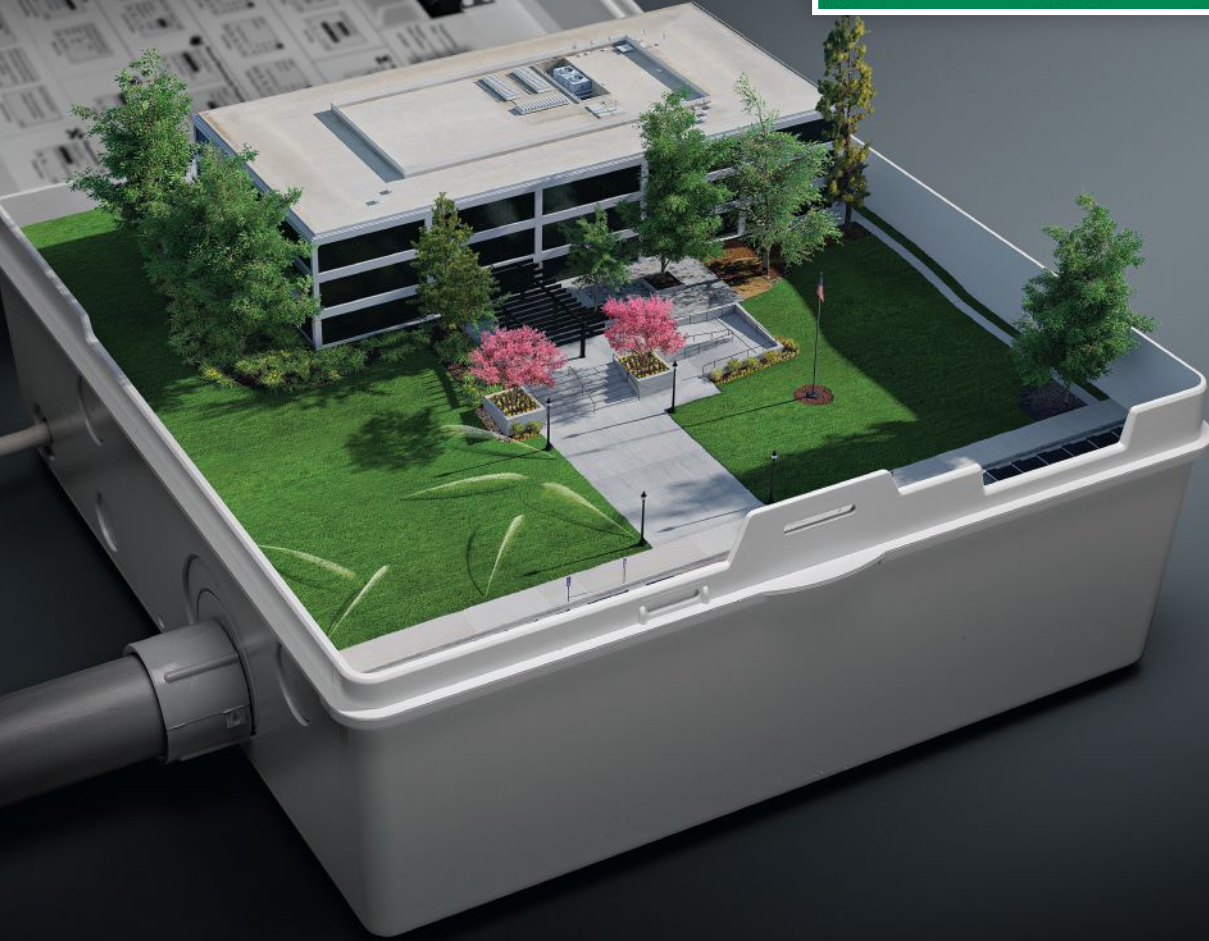
How do your products help generate additional revenue and profits for landscape and lawn care companies?

Because the LXIVM is the simplest two-wire system to install, operate and maintain, it appeals to a broader group of customers. While the higher initial cost of these systems helps increase revenue for contractors, the system's lower overall cost of ownership benefits end users.

Splice issues account for more than 90 percent of all two-wire system failures. Assuming the same level of installation quality, LXIVM systems with half the splices will be twice as reliable as equivalent decoder systems. The controller's Smart Valve technology also makes trending data for all irrigation zones and sensors available to proactively avoid system failures that can cost considerable time and money.

It's Your World.

TAKE CONTROL



Introducing the ESP-LXIVM.
A breakthrough in two-wire control.

- Save time with 50% fewer wire connections
- Fewer splices leads to increased reliability
- Get faster response time and enhanced diagnostics

Learn about the ESP-LXIVM and our full lineup of control solutions at rainbird.com/TakeControl-IVM.



RAIN  BIRD®

PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$



Scag Q+A with Chris Frame President

How do your products save time?

Each and every Scag product is built to save the user time by being tough and user friendly. Ultrastrong construction and components withstand the everyday demands of commercial use, while user-centric design places important controls within easy reach for the operator. Simple, intuitive machine controls paired with zero-turn maneuverability allow the operator to knock out job after job with quickness and precision.

How do your products save labor?

More productivity per employee means the business owner is paying less overtime or simply needs fewer employees to do a given amount of work. A great example of this in the Scag lineup is with the Windstorm stand-on blower. We've been told by actual users that one Windstorm blower can replace the productivity



of four, five or even six employees using backpack blowers doing the same job. Those are some extremely powerful numbers to consider. Now, those extra employees can be deployed to additional jobs during that amount of time, making the company more revenue.

How do your products save materials or fuel?

We have seen increased demand for more fuel-efficient engines, such as those with electronic fuel injection, so our lineup has seen the addition of more fuel injected engine offerings in recent years. Not only does increased fuel efficiency shave down fuel expense,

but it also saves time otherwise spent by having to stop and refuel instead of working.

How do your products help generate additional revenue for landscape and lawn care companies?

The new Scag Turf Storm stand-on spreader-sprayer provides landscape professionals with an additional revenue stream in lawn chemical application (fertilizer, herbicide, pesticide). This is a highly profitable service that can help the business owner gain more customers by offering a more well-rounded lawn maintenance program.



THE MOST RELIABLE COMMERCIAL-GRADE PRODUCTS.
DESIGNED AND BUILT BY WORLD-CLASS CRAFTSMEN.
SOLD AND SERVICED BY THE NATION'S BEST DEALERS.

SCAG
POWER EQUIPMENT

#1

AGAIN!
5X RECIPIENT

**2020 EDA Dealer's Choice
Award Winner**



Since 1983, Scag Power Equipment has manufactured "Simply the Best" commercial riding, stand-on and walk-behind lawn mowers money can buy. Scag's innovation and attention to quality is known and respected throughout the industry. If you are looking for the highest quality, best built, best cutting commercial-grade lawn mower or leaf management equipment, proudly made in the USA, look no further.

Don't miss our online tradeshow experience - Scag LIVE - October 21, 2020
Register now at www.Scag.com/ScagLiveRegistration

SCAG.com
f i y

PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$



SmartGate Conveys

Q+A with **Jonathan Snyder**
CEO

How do your units save time and labor?

Since 2016, SmartGate Conveyors has been eliminating the hand labor to unload landscape materials from off the truck and into a wheelbarrow, cart, container or spreader. It can dispense material out either side and along a blacktop edge or curbside at the press of a button, resulting in ease of spreading and peak efficiency. With the SmartGate Conveyor unloading at a rate of nearly 1 cubic yard per minute, it raises the bar and has set a new pace for placing landscape products. In the time it took to grab the shovel to start handling the product, your wheelbarrow can be full. Our unit speeds up the loading process by three times or more and will totally eliminate the need for climbing onto the truck, reducing the risk of injury and fatigue. This efficiency will free up hardworking team members you already have and allow you to place them in other needed positions of your company

and get the job done much quicker.

How do your units make landscape and lawn care companies more profitable?

Transportation to and from the job for the crew and their tools is one of the more costly investments a landscape maintenance company has. Small- to medium-sized dump trucks have been the “tool of choice” and serve a major role in this industry. SmartGate Conveyors developed its low-maintenance units to utilize the existing benefits of a dump truck without hindering its original use. It replaces your dump truck tailgate and is only slightly thicker, allowing for normal trailer towing or bulk dump off. Take mulch out in the morning and bring debris back to dump off in the evening. Since the product is gravity fed into the unit by raising the dump, there are no high-maintenance tarp or web floor issues, and it sells at a fraction of the cost of those options. With river rock and other decorative stones becoming a high demand in low-maintenance landscape solutions, our units give an economical alternative to transporting expensive,



specialized equipment to the job site to handle these products, saving travel time and fuel on the road.

With our units capable of handling sand, aggregate, river rock, decorative stone, compost, topsoil and all types of wood and bark mulch, your return on investment can be felt all season long. But, in the event you need to remove the unit, our quick-connect couplers, simple tailgate pivot point and chain pocket system will detach in minutes!

“We expanded our company services,” “experienced huge time savings,” “we became more profitable,” and “the unit paid for itself already this year” are just a few of the phrases we hear from our satisfied users. SmartGate Conveyors continues to step into the future with a commitment to develop new, time-saving products and build for a better tomorrow today!





- **COMPACT DESIGN**

- **ECONOMIC VERSATILITY**

- **ENGINEERED IN INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE**



■ **Mulch**

■ **Sand**

■ **Stone**

■ **Topsoil**

■ **Compost**



SmartGate

Press to load...shovel the savings



www.SmartGateConveyors.com



PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$



Smart Rain

Q+A with **Dan Hymas**
President

How do your products save time?

Smart Rain was created to solve the biggest problems we see in the irrigation industry. One of those problems is unnecessary site visits. We save our clients time by increasing the efficiency of managing landscape irrigation. Being able to control and monitor multiple sites from one easy-to-use mobile dashboard increases turnaround and dispatch time.

How do your products save labor?

Smart Rain's proprietary Google Mapping integration will save your employees time by allowing them to see the location of each zone and the on-site hardware from their smart device and run any zone from the map view.

How do your products save water?

By utilizing a new groundbreaking approach to ET watering, we are changing the way properties save water. On average, our customers

have seen 30 percent savings on their water bills, which translates to thousands of dollars in savings. Our products are EPA WaterSense certified and eligible for rebates from your local water districts.

How do your products help generate additional revenue for landscape and lawn care companies?

Smart Rain creates transparency between landscape professionals and their clients. Increased efficiencies and time management help your teams become more profitable. With our help, your company becomes more than a weekly service provider; you also develop a relationship



and opportunities as their water manager. If you are in the commercial landscape field, this is a game-changing retention tool.

How is Smart Rain different than other smart controllers?

Smart Rain offers a level of support and service that is not found anywhere else in the smart controller industry. With dedicated 24/7 account managers, lifetime warranty and free upgrades, it's no wonder that Smart Rain is seeing such success and happy customers.



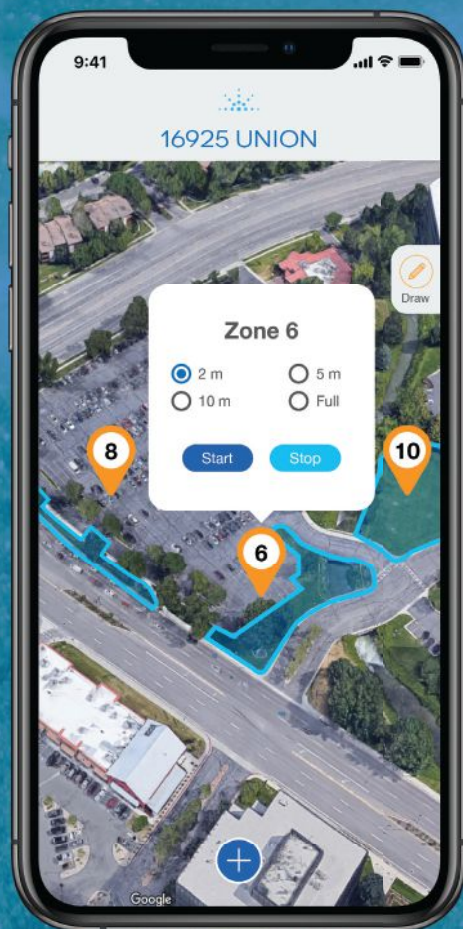
BECOME AQUAMAN

WITH SMART RAIN

YOU MAY NOT
CONTROL THE SEVEN
SEAS, BUT YOU CAN
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PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$



Spring-Green Lawn Care

Q+A with **James Young**
Chief Operating Officer of Spring-Green Enterprises

How does Spring-Green help its franchise owners profitably plan for growth within their business?

Each fall, our franchise owners participate in business and marketing planning sessions. These sessions are designed to help each franchise owner in setting both annual and long-term goals, all by creating a plan to achieve them. With the help of their dedicated franchise business consultant, they finalize their plan by determining the marketing investment needed to achieve their growth and profitability goals and then go to work on executing the plan.

How does Spring-Green Lawn Care guide its franchise owners down the path of profitability?

Increasing revenue is just one part of the equation when adding a Spring-Green franchise to work in conjunction with an existing green industry business. Developing and sustaining healthy margins is the fuel that drives profitability. We help boost their margins by

managing material costs and selling additional services, as well as by finding the balance of in-field productivity and appropriate compensation for their staff.

With the right margins in place, the franchise owner can focus on maximizing their customer retention by identifying a pricing strategy for their market and providing a superior customer experience for those customers.

What are some additional ways that Spring-Green Lawn Care helps franchise owners maintain a healthy margin?

There are several contributing factors that help drive profitable margins at Spring-Green Lawn Care.

- **Low overhead** – Our franchise owners have no concern for high rent associated with a brick and mortar franchise. This allows them to operate with lower rent or shared expenses.
- **National pricing** – We have established national pricing programs with key distributors. By working with our vendors

directly, we can pass along the savings to our franchise owners.

- **Cost-saving equipment** – We have equipment that regulates material usage and allows for the treatment of only the needed areas.
- **Our workforce** – Our service attracts a skilled labor force that allows us to operate with one employee per truck.
- **Software** – Our industry-leading, business software assists with efficient scheduling, routing and billing.
- **Prepaid service** – We offer our customers an incentive for prepaying for service, which provides the needed cash flow during those nonpeak periods.
- **Operational focus** – Utilizing our industry-leading business and marketing intelligence allows our franchise owners to keep their focus on the operations of the business and high customer renewal rates.

SPRING-GREEN
 Your Neighborhood Lawn Care Professional.



\$25,000+ STIMULUS PLAN OPEN TO GREEN INDUSTRY

Industry experts have been preaching diversification to green industry business owners since before the great recession. Many have considered residential fertilization and weed control because of the recurring revenue, high profit margins and the natural cross sell opportunity. The difficulty is providing the needed attention while everything else is equally important.

Spring-Green Lawn Care has strategically positioned its franchise opportunity to help you do both. This family owned 43 year old lawn care company just doubled down on their value position by removing the barrier to entry (no fees) and putting their money where their mouth is by introducing a stimulus program (\$25,000) to incentivize savvy business owners to do what they know they need to do - diversify.

Why are they doing this? Over 35% of their franchise owners successfully operate a green industry business as a sister company to their Spring-Green franchise.

Ted Hofer, CEO said "heading into the spring we had a strong plan and for a few weeks we scrambled to adjust. With a bit of luck and a whole lot of work we were able to adjust our marketing campaigns to maximize the opportunity we had. We helped our owners create a road map for operating safely and work to assure our existing customers were able to take care of their properties with the

same attention to detail as they had come to expect from us. All of this effort has translated into one of our best years. We are seeing growth ranging from 8-15% dependent on the region and franchise location."

This success has given Spring-Green the confidence to create a green industry Stimulus Plan. Hofer says "in the last decade, we have amassed a collection of success stories of existing green industry owners who have leaned on Spring-Green to help them succeed. The pandemic is just another example of the value of being part of this organization. In challenging times, having a dedicated team who is focused on your success and a network of business owners who are facing the same challenges, is crucial. We have a history of rising to the occasion and a culture that recognizes the importance of your family business."

Diversification is a good business strategy. Pandemic aside, if Spring-Green services can be a benefit and not a hindrance on your existing business then you owe it to yourself and your family to investigate. Spring-Green's recurring revenue model is a critical component to building a transferrable asset for business owners and their families. It is important to build your business with an exit or succession plan in mind and with 43 years of experience Spring-Green can help you achieve your long term goals. Spring-Green Lawn Care

What is the Spring-Green Stimulus Plan?

There are three components to the Spring-Green Stimulus Plan*

Waived Franchise Fees:

No initial fees to join.

Marketing Loan w/ Loan Forgiveness:

\$25,000 low interest loan repayment plan with up to 50% forgiveness if revenue goals are achieved.

Reduced Royalty:

Reduce royalty period for first year.

*Visit us to learn more at

www.spring-green.com/stimulus.

services are centered on the beautification of residential and commercial customers in middle-class and affluent neighborhoods and communities. Spring-Green is an attractive opportunity for existing green industry business owners who want to align themselves with a partner that has proven economic resilience, healthy profit margins, industry leading business and marketing intelligence, recurring revenue, and retirement and family planning through business ownership.

For more information, please visit www.spring-green.com/stimulus or call **1-800-777-8608** to learn more about the Spring-Green Stimulus Plan and the benefits of owning a Spring-Green Lawn Care business.

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Statistics are from the Spring-Green Franchise Disclosure Document (FDD) dates March 27, 2020. For more information, see Item 19 of the FDD. This information is not intended as an offer to sell, or solicitation of an offer to buy, a franchise. It is for informational purposes only. Currently, the following states regulate the offer and sale of a franchise: CA, HI, IL, IN, MD, NY, ND, OR, RI, SD, VA, WA and WI. If you are a resident of one of these states, we will not offer you a franchise unless and until we have complied with applicable pre-sale registration and disclosure requirements in your jurisdiction.

PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$



Takeuchi

Q+A with Lee Padgett Product Manager

How do your products save time?

Takeuchi products are designed to save both time and labor by increasing efficiency and reducing the number of employees required to do a job. Not only do these machines increase productivity, but also the reduction in staff on the job site often makes for a safer work environment. Compact track loaders and mini excavators are very capable and versatile machines that excel in a wide range of applications. In addition to their ability to shorten the time required for grading and dirt work, standard auxiliary hydraulic circuits allow them to operate a wide variety of hydraulic attachments, greatly increasing their versatility and productivity.

How do your products save materials or fuel?

All Takeuchi products meet current EPA emissions regulations. The new Tier 4 final engines are much more efficient, consuming less fuel by providing better fuel combustion through the use of high-pressure



common rail fuel systems and turbochargers.

How do your products help generate additional revenue for landscape companies?

Auxiliary hydraulics enable our machines to operate a variety of hydraulic attachments, greatly increasing their versatility. Traditionally, compact equipment would be used for simple grading and dirt work applications or with forks to move pallets of sod or brick pavers. Now, with available auxiliary hydraulics, the range of applications these machines are able to perform in has greatly expanded to areas like tree spades for nursery work, power rakes

for soil conditioning, mowers for larger tracts of vegetation and trenchers for irrigation placement. Even off-season applications like snow removal can greatly increase revenue for landscapers.

In what other ways do your products make landscape companies profitable?

Takeuchi's purpose-built design philosophy and outstanding build quality uses all steel construction and model specific components, providing less maintenance and downtime and increasing your productivity and overall profitability. Less time in the shop and more time on job site means more money in the owner's pocket.

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PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$



Turfco

Q+A

with **Scott Kinhead**
Executive Vice President

How do your products make landscape and lawn care companies more profitable?

Our ongoing goal is to grow a landscaper's business. We make products that improve productivity, are easy to operate and need minimal maintenance, freeing up time to focus on other things. It makes the business more enjoyable as well as more profitable. By working directly with our customers, we help overcome what's stopping their productivity. Many owners tell us they have enough business but need equipment that is easy to learn and easy to operate to be more successful.

How do you come up with your unique innovations and patents?

We have numerous patents that are designed to improve productivity. We listen and work with our

customers to find the solutions they need to be more productive. As an example, the drive design on the T3100 with hands-free speed control provides drive and operation that is so intuitive it literally saves thousands of dollars a year in training. It also reduces fatigue for the operator. It makes hill-holding easier without tearing up the turf and cuts callbacks way back. Even brand-new staff can be up to speed in a few days.

How do your products save time?

Using the Drop Seeder Attachment on the XT8 Aerator allows operators to increase revenue by up to 50 percent without spending more time on the property. They can seed and aerate at the same time. The T3100 is the largest-capacity applicator that fits through a 36-inch gate. The three-in-one tank makes it the most versatile spreader in the industry. Route management is more efficient.



How do your products make staff happy and more productive?

There is nothing better for staff morale and staff longevity than equipment that helps the job go smoother and faster. With the 22-hp engine on the XT8, for instance, the operator can aerate as fast as driving up to 7 mph. That's 2 acres in an hour. In our family's history of over 100 years in the industry, we have focused on equipment that makes our customers more profitable, and we love what we do. The right equipment does make a difference.



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PROFITABLE PRODUCT\$



Vermeer



with **Brett Newendorp**
Landscape Market Manager

How do your products save time?

Loaders come in all shapes and sizes, but more and more landscape contractors are choosing Vermeer mini skid-steers to help perform work once done by hand. Fitting into tighter areas, backyards and through narrow gates are some of the mini skid-steer's biggest time-saving benefits.

How do your products save labor?

Mini skid-steers don't just perform one task on a job well; they can do a great job with creating labor efficiencies on the whole project. For example, a mini skid-steer paired with a hydraulic breaker attachment can be taken through a narrow entryway and help be more efficient than a traditional jackhammer and air compressor. Plus, contractors can haul the debris away by switching

out to a bucket attachment. Also, since some larger mini skid-steers on the market offer higher lift capacities, the operator can easily load it into the back of a dump truck to haul away.

What are some of ways your product reduces the need for other equipment on the job?

All Vermeer mini skid-steers are equipped with a universal attachment plate and auxiliary hydraulic connections for interchanging various attachments on the job site. This can give landscape contractors the capability of using a leveler attachment to prep the area, a vibratory plow attachment to install electricity for landscape lighting and a grapple attachment for placing blocks, all with one machine.

What are some of the other labor-saving attachments commonly used by landscape contractors?

There is a wide range of attachment options available for mini skid-steers, including buckets and blades for dirt work and site prep. Grapples, such as the Vermeer SLG46, can be used to handle logs and brush, and even



help feed a brush chipper. Powered rakes and tillers can prepare areas for seeding or beds for planting. Auger drives and bits can be used to install fence posts or dig holes for planting trees. Trencher and plow attachments work well for irrigation or utility installation work.

In what other ways do your products make landscape and lawn care companies profitable?

The overall weight of mini skid-steers and attachments puts less stress on the towing vehicle and does not require a driver to have a CDL. The lighter weight also helps produce less ground disturbance.



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FIVE QUESTIONS

INTERVIEW BY SETH JONES | LM EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Dusty Montiel

GENERAL MANAGER

ONE TWO TREE

MIAMI, FLA.

1 Tell me about One Two Tree.

We started back in 1987 as a tree (care) company. We were doing all types of tree work, tree removal, stump grinding, debris hauling. Then, in 2001, Marc and Paul Terwilliger, the owners, opened a lawn spray division. That took off, and now it's the largest division we have in the company. In 2013, we said we're ready to add on another service. We entered interior pest control and mosquito control. We're running three full tree service routes, 15 lawn care routes and three pest control routes.

2 How did you get into the business?

I've been around the lawn spray/pest control world without even knowing. My father-in-law did it for 28 years. I've been with my wife Alejandra for 20 years (married 18); I was 16 when we met. She was in the military, and I was a dependent. We went to Germany and built our lives outside the States. When I got back, I said OK, it's time to start roots here. My brother-in-law was in the business, and he told me, "You should come to One Two Tree." At the time, I was in the tire business. Marc saw something in me and said you look like a customer service person. I started as a spray tech and gradually started doing other parts — sales, quality control, customer service. In 2013, I was promoted to branch manager, which was pretty cool, because when I started, I didn't even know what a blade of grass was! Now, I'm certified in lawn and pest control, and I'm general manager and run three offices for One Two Tree.

3 What do you and your family like to do for fun?

We like to — and COVID put a wrench into this — my wife and my son Kevin, he just turned 17 ... our little family, our favorite thing to do is travel. We like seeing different cities, different cultures. The pandemic has been a major damper on our lifestyle. In July, we went ahead and traveled, and we jumped off the cliff and went to Cancún. We stayed a week down there; it was weird. The resort was only 30 percent full. There was a missing personality to the resort. But, at the same time, I felt a little bit normal.

4 What are your favorite tools to get the job done?

We just got two Steel Green spreader-sprayers, with the 30-gallon tanks on each side. We have one job site; it's a big community. It's been a four-week project. We put a Steel Green machine there, and we've cut down an entire week of work on that site. I'm talking about less pulling of hose, less time on the property. It freed up a week where we can do something else. That's where it opened our eyes. It helps out buying the equipment that fits the need for large landscapes. I have a technician who said to me, "You can send me anywhere in the world with this machine, and I'll work for you!" If they believe, then I believe. They're the end users.

5 What's something people might not know about Miami?

It's a fast city. It's work, work, work. One thing you can do in Miami is have a staycation. We'll take a night in downtown Miami, a night in Miami Beach. When you're out there just enjoying the town, and it's not the hustle and bustle? It's a beautiful city. I get why people from around the country come here. Hanging by the beach, by the pool with a mojito or a margarita ... the scenery, the palms, the turquoise water, the downtown life ... you feel like a rock star. 🌴

BEST ADVICE

"Harry Myers, my mentor, an entomologist out of Purdue, sat me down and said, 'I'm going to tell you something: You can continue in sales, it's self-glorifying, but you have a personality that you could work with multiple people. If you go into management, you're affecting others.' Professionally, that was the best encouragement I've ever been given."





BY KEVIN KEHOE

The author is managing partner of The Aspire Software Co. Reach him at kevin.kehoe@youraspire.com.

Path to 12% profit — equipment

This is the last of four columns on key performance indicator (KPI) return on investment. I will say it again: The industry's average net profit is less than 6 percent. It should be closer to 12 percent. This low net profit is driven by three KPIs — labor, overhead and equipment. These three KPIs represent 96 percent of your annual expenses and investments. And, they are the ones to watch because you invest in them for one simple reason — to generate more revenue efficiently. Maximizing revenue per dollar of cost is the goal. The higher the KPI ratio, the higher your net profit. In this column, I address the final KPI — equipment.

First, the calculation: Equipment KPI = revenue divided by equipment cost.

In this example, the equipment KPI is \$2.40. This means that one dollar of equipment (vehicles and capital equipment more than \$1,000 in purchase price) yields an annual return of \$2.40. If this seems low, it is. The benchmark is \$3.25. The benchmark measures the 95 percent percentile in industry return on investment and productivity. By applying that benchmark to \$3 million of revenue, equipment cost should be \$923,077, not \$1,250,000.

“The industry's average net profit is less than 6 percent. It should be closer to 12 percent. This low net profit is driven by three KPIs — labor, overhead and equipment.”

Since equipment has a lifespan of longer than one year, we apply a five-year average life, and this yields an annual profit impact of \$65,385 or a 2.18 percent increase in net profit. This is significant.

Second, the reality: Most companies are overinvested in equipment. Maybe it's because we like our toys or maybe because we like to keep them and fix them or maybe because they seem cheap enough and everyone is crying for more. These are all very real reasons, but the fact remains that excess equipment ties up cash and robs the bottom line. The KPI ratio does differ by region, so I'm using an average. The benchmark KPI is lower where snow equipment skews it. But, that doesn't change the profit impact — just the actual benchmark.

How do you increase this KPI? What's required are technologies

like asset trackers and shop control software. These can provide the essential information that drives utilization, repair and asset disposition. Understanding these submetrics is essential to improving KPI performance and altering the behaviors that drive overinvestment in equipment. Lacking detailed data on machine utilization and repair history, there is little hope of improving the equipment KPI. But knowing this data allows for incremental:

- Reduction in hours and vehicle miles through rerouting;
- Reduction in repair costs through earlier disposition and identification of operator and brand failure;
- Reduction in parts inventory through platform/brand standardization;
- Reduction in investment through extended life of some equipment;
- Reduction in shop and yard staff; and
- Increase in some service subcontracting in lieu of purchase/ownership.

Every industry experiences the same evolution. The winners make labor more productive with equipment, and then they make the equipment more productive with technology. The result is lower investment, reducing cost, and higher revenue creation, increasing net profit. There's a reason the average landscape industry net profit is lower than 6 percent, and it's not because we don't spend enough on labor, overhead and equipment. It's because we're underspending on technologies like field activity tracking and a system of record software we need to analyze and improve our decision-making. 📍

Example

Income statement		Calculation and impact		
Revenue	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$1,250,000	\$2.40
		\$3,000,000	\$923,077	\$3.25
Balance sheet				
Equipment cost	\$1,250,000		\$326,923	
Equipment lifespan	5		\$65,385	
Net profit impact at benchmark			2.18%	


BY JEFFREY SCOTT

The author is owner of Jeffrey Scott Consulting, which helps landscape companies grow and maximize profits. Reach him at jeff@jeffreyscott.biz.

It's never too early to plan your exit

Last month, a client told me he wants to get his exit plan figured out ASAP.

He wants to enjoy his new grandkids and take some free time now. He probably should have started this process a while ago. How about you? Where are you with planning your future?

It's never too early to start: The best time to start is 10 years out, and the next best time to start is right now. Here are some important questions to get started:

WHO'S YOUR BUYER?

Are you selling to family or non-family? Is it someone you already know and trust or a team of leaders already in your business? Or, is it an outside buyer who will pay the highest price — be it a strategic buyer, an investor or an investor/operator who will run the business?

Even if you're not sure, decide who it won't be, and your vision will start to clarify.

WHEN DO YOU PLAN TO SELL?

Will it be more than 10 years out, in five-plus years or much sooner, like in a year or two? Knowing the time frame will dictate what kind of actions you need to take and how quickly.

HOW MUCH?

Do you have a number you need to earn for the business? If so, what is your business worth now? Or, are you simply trying to maximize the value? Having specific financial goals will bring clarity.

WHAT'S YOUR ROLE?

Are you looking to keep working

once you begin the transition? If so, what do you want your role to be? How long do you want to be in that new role? Or, do you want to be totally out of the business? If so, get clear on the maximum support you're willing to give the new owner.

WHY ARE YOU SELLING?

It may seem like an obvious question, but the biggest reason transactions fail is the seller is not sure what he or she will be doing after the sale. The seller feels lost and thus sabotages the deal. Identify what your entrance plan will be for the next phase of your life.

WHERE TO START?

Use my "3 Cs."

- Clean numbers that are not burdened with excessive and confusing owner perks (assuming you're getting ready to sell).
- Clear numbers, including up to five years of comparable numbers, so it's easy to read the trends.
- Compelling numbers that show positive trends in growth: turning assets into sales, turning sales into profits and turning profits into cash.

Next, remove yourself from the equation. Set up your sales, operations

and admin to operate without you in the day to day, even if you continue to support one of these areas.

Or, take it a step further like my client George Tucker, owner of Landesign in St. Louis. He brought in a CEO to run and aggressively grow his business, so he can enjoy his role of salesperson and owner.

Then, address the underlying risks. A company's valuation is reduced based on the risks.

Address the internal risks, external risks, service-mix risks, client risks, the inherent risk of your business model and other risks that face your business.

Finally, get the right leadership team in place. Stabilize your core team and make sure they work with you through the succession, especially if you're selling to someone else. There are ways to lock them in and ensure a smooth transition. If they are the ones buying the business, then, of course, this action goes to the top of the list.

Remember, selling your business is an existential challenge because it makes you face your life's purpose and the needs of the next phase of your life.

What if someone came along today and gave you a crazy good offer to buy your business, but before buying, he or she performs due diligence and then reduces the offer based on all the risks and problems uncovered? Will you be ready?

As a first step, go through my questions and start a plan now. This will also help comfort your employees and your family if they have to deal with all this without you. Reach out and let me know how it goes! 📧



IS YOUR SAFETY AND HEALTH MANAGEMENT PLAN EFFECTIVE?

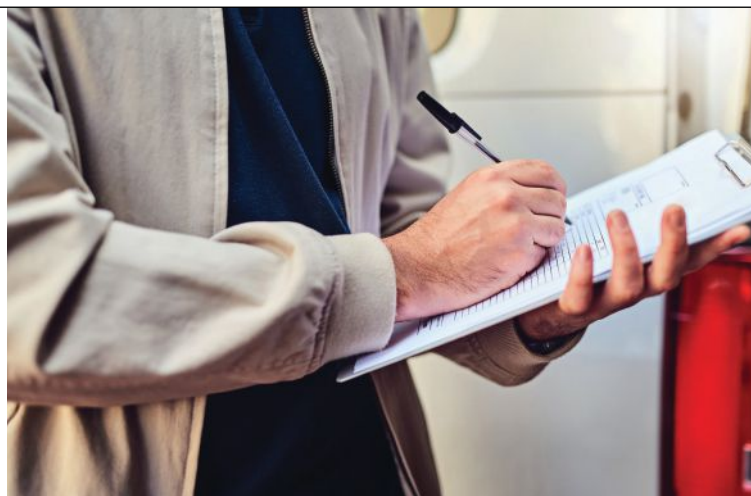
BY SAM STEEL, Ed.D.

Over the past two editions, I've discussed the planning and implementing phases of an effective safety and health management plan. This final edition covers how to ensure the program is effective. In other words, has employees' safety knowledge increased, and do their worksite behaviors positively reflect that improved knowledge level?

Let's look at some useful evaluation methods.

Step 1: To determine how much your workers know about safe work habits, give them a brief pretest just before the training session begins. For example, if you're going to present tailgate training on hearing protection, ask a question or two about workplace equipment or machinery that generates excessive noise levels; how these levels are calculated in decibels; and what safety gear can be worn to reduce human exposure to excessive occupational noise. If possible, keep a record of the pretest responses to compare to test responses after the training has been completed. Just like the training materials, pre- and post-test written sheets must be understandable to all workers.


Step 2: Present training and briefings to employees. Ensure the training materials are in a language that all workers can understand. Trainers may need to work individually with crew members who have difficulty translating and understanding the safety principles.



Step 3: Once you have presented the training, get post-test responses to the same knowledge-based questions that you asked before the training session. If the post-tests do not indicate improvement, retraining may be required.

Step 4: If the post-tests indicate improved understanding about the safety topic, you can reinforce the effectiveness measures by conducting workplace observations. One of the company commitments you have for worker safety is to provide them with personal protective equipment (PPE), such as earmuffs or ear plugs in a hearing protection area.

For example, if during a visit to a commercial mowing site, you notice one of your zero-turn operators is not wearing hearing protection, you have several options. Safely signal the operator to stop the machine and remind him or her about the excessive noise PPE requirements; have the crew manager reinforce the requirement for PPE; and consider retraining of the employee.

If the safety training fails because of the training site or trainer, go back to the planning and implementing stages to make changes for increasing your program's effectiveness. 

Sam Steel, Ed.D., is the safety adviser for the National Association of Landscape Professionals.

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- Brad Leahy, Blades of Green

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a.	Total Number of Copies (Net press run)	57,476	54,505
b.	Legitimate Paid and/or Requested Distribution (By mail and outside the mail)		
	(1) Outside County Paid/Requested Mail Subscriptions stated on PS Form 3541. (Include direct written request from recipient, telemarketing, and Internet requests from recipient, paid subscriptions including nominal rate subscriptions, employer requests, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies.)	48,003	47,364
	(2) In-County Paid/Requested Mail Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541. (Include direct written request from recipient, telemarketing and Internet requests from recipient, paid subscriptions including nominal rate subscriptions, employer requests, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies.)	0	0
	(3) Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid or Requested Distribution Outside USPS*	36	35

(4) Requested Copies Distributed by Other Mail Classes Through the USPS (e.g. First-Class Mail®)	0	0
c. Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation (Sum of 15b (1), (2), (3), and (4))	48,039	47,399
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(1) Outside County Nonrequested Copies Stated on PS Form 3541 (include sample copies, requests over 3 years old, requests induced by a premium, bulk sales and requests including association requests, names obtained from business directories, lists, and other sources)	8,793	6,653
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e. Total Nonrequested Distribution (Sum of 15d (1), (2), (3), and (4))	9,027	6,755
f. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c and e)	57,066	54,154
g. Copies not Distributed	410	351
h. Total (Sum of 15f and g)	57,476	54,505
i. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation (15c divided by 15f times 100)	84.2%	87.5%
16. Electronic Copy Circulation		
a. Requested and Paid Electronic Copies	6,856	6,674
b. Total Requested and Paid Print Copies (Line 15c) + Requested/Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a)	54,895	54,073
c. Total Requested Copy Distribution (Line 15f) + Requested/Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a)	63,922	60,828
d. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation (Both Print & Electronic Copies) (16b divided by 16c x 100)	85.9%	88.9%
I certify that 50% of all my distributed copies (electronic and print) are legitimate requests or paid copies.		
17. Publication of Statement of Ownership for a Requester Publication is required and will be printed in the October 2020 issue of this publication.		
18. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner Antoinette Sanchez-Perkins, Senior Audience Development Manager		Date: 9/14/20

I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including civil penalties).

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BY MARTY GRUNDER

The author is president and CEO of Grunder Landscaping Co. and The Grow Group, based in Dayton, Ohio. Reach him at marty@growgroupinc.com.



Lay the foundation for a strong 2021

With just a couple months left in 2020, many of us have shifted most of our focus to the year ahead. You're already having conversations about budgets and growth projections, and you're laying out the steps you need to take to get where you want to go.

The first considerations when you want to grow are what the sales goals for your team should be, what new equipment you may need and how many team members you'll need to hire to do the additional work you sell. This planning can't be overlooked, but in the final months of this year, I recommend all companies also tackle three projects to ensure they have the proper framework in place for long-term success. They include the following:

1 Align self and company interest.

In the Profit Pros Virtual Workshop we held in August, I stressed that the best way to motivate team members to care about your company's profitability is to clearly show them what's in it for *them*. At Grunder Landscaping Co. (GLC), we structure our sales compensation so our sales team has a vested interest in the success and profitability of the job, and we pay commissions based on gross margin rather than on revenue.

On the production side, we watch for trends in job-level data like the efficiency rating, quality audits, and we do warranty calls throughout the year and take that data into account when making promotion and raise decisions. Our team members know which

metrics are part of their performance review, and they understand what's expected if they want to reach the next step in their careers. We make it clear that our team members will benefit financially when the company is profitable to align our team's self-interest with the company's interests.

2 Understand your costs.

It's common sense that you shouldn't bid a job at \$15,000 if it's going to cost you \$20,000, but do your salespeople have the tools they need to accurately project costs and bid profitable work?

We use Aspire Software at GLC, which standardizes our bids to ensure we're proposing profitable work. There are other industry software options that can help with this, or, as a last resort, you can use spreadsheets to track costs manually. An effective sales process that includes standardized costs and quoting is key to a successful sales team.

3 Review your performance.


After a job is complete, review your performance for both quality and profitability standards with the teams who were responsible for the job. Doing this step regularly helps to diagnose any issues before they repeat themselves. As the year ends, it's a great time to look back for trends in this data:

- Are there neighborhoods where we are consistently finishing over or under budget?
- Is one salesperson responsible for a large share of our most profitable jobs?

“You're already having conversations about budgets and growth projections.”

- Is one team leader particularly skilled at coming in under budgeted hours?

Then, form an action plan to replicate successes and address any shortcomings. Invest in training your team to prepare to hit the ground running, and make the promotion, raise and hiring decisions needed.

No one said running a business would be easy, but the tactics here will lay a foundation for measuring your business and assessing what can be improved. This foundation will help your team understand common goals and how their own roles impact them, and it will help you score your success for years to come. 

We will be holding two of our popular virtual events, our Virtual Sales Bootcamp and our Profit Pros Virtual Workshop, again in December to help companies prepare for a strong 2021. To learn more, visit <https://growgroupinc.com/upcoming-events>.

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